

# CLAUSTROPHOBIA

BY BERTRAM D. LEWIN (NEW YORK)

The technical term claustrophobia, introduced into medical literature by Raggi of Bologna in 1871, means literally a dread of being enclosed. There are several forms such a dread may take, and several fears that are akin to it, but current linguistic usage tends to limit the application of the term to a special type of fear dramatized for us by Poe in the Pit and the Pendulum—a fear of being caught or crushed by a gradual closing in of the space about one. This definition, which will be followed in the present essay, would exclude such fears as that of entering a closed space, which might if one wishes be considered “claustrophoboid”; but the reason for this strict definition will become clear as we proceed.

Claustrophobia is a type of morbid fear, a form of anxiety hysteria, yet despite the numerous detailed studies of anxiety hysteria to be found in the psychoanalytic literature, there are nevertheless few references concerning this particular phobia. Jones<sup>1</sup> in one place remarks that dreams and fantasies concerning one's own birth are very common especially in childhood and that these fantasies constitute the basis of such phobias as being buried alive or being shut in an enclosed space (i.e., claustrophobia) and many others. Ferenczi<sup>2</sup> too refers to the association between claustrophobia and the idea of being within one's mother: “The psychoanalysis of numerous dreams and of neurotic claustrophobia explains the fear of being buried alive as the transformation into dread of the wish to return to the womb.” Elsewhere Ferenczi<sup>3</sup> states that claustrophobia and a fear of being alone in any closed room in one of his patients developed from an attempt to overcome masturbation.

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, Ernest: *Papers on Psychoanalysis*. P. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Ferenczi, Sándor: *Further Contributions, etc.* P. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Ferenczi, Sándor: *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*. P. 51.

These valuable comments establish for us a relationship between manifest claustrophobia and latent fantasies of being within the mother's body, but so far no author (except Melanie Klein in passing) has considered the *specific* anxiety in claustrophobia, as this phrase is defined by Freud in *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*. The question, of what is the claustrophobic afraid? has not been adequately answered. This essay will attempt to answer this question, in terms of specific anxiety and specific measures of defense.

A young woman of thirty had ordered her life in general so as to escape marriage and the male sex. A business woman, she affected masculine ways and consorted almost exclusively with women. For sexual pleasure she masturbated or, occasionally and casually, engaged in mutual masturbation with another woman. Men were often interested in her, for she was goodlooking, clever and wealthy, but with the remote approach of an intimate relationship they would find themselves baffled by alternations in her of tense moodiness and inept sudden aggressiveness; they would find her unaccountable and give her up as a bad job. Twice this patient had severe attacks of claustrophobia. One of these was in her berth on a sleeping car. She was on her way to spend some time with a married friend. This friend's husband had once caressed her, and it was while returning from the dressing room at the end of the car that the patient thought of this particular matter and felt a certain expectancy at seeing him again. Lying in her berth then she heard a man's footsteps as he passed by, and she was seized by fear. Subjectively this fear was marked by the feeling that the walls of the berth were closing in on her, by inability to catch her breath, by an intense warmth accompanied by sudden perspiration. She cut the attack short by jumping up and running into the dressing room. Her other claustrophobic attack occurred while she was spending some time at a friend's country place. A young man had been invited there without her knowledge to meet her, and it was while in bed that she experienced the same fear as on the train.

The analysis of these two incidents was accompanied by



several interesting "transference phenomena" and transient symptoms. Thus she stated that she felt enveloped in an armor which the analyst's voice could not penetrate, then suddenly in terror exclaimed sharply, "Don't touch me!" While she was on the couch, the analyst was accidentally called out of the room and returning found her lying flexed on one side in the so-called foetal posture. It was learned that she had rearranged the furnishings of her two-room apartment: all the things in the sitting room that possessed any emotional value for her, excepting her piano, which was too large,—her books, pictures, desk and the rest, were crammed into her bedroom, and there she read or worked cozily in bed, with all her prized belongings crowded about her.

The terror of being touched appeared then in her dreams. In one of these a man identifiable as the analyst kicked a boat lying in drydock, which then plunged forward into the water. In another dream a long pole was violently pushed through a window pane into the room where she was lying; she grasped the pole in alarm and tried to pull it away from the man who was pushing it in. It became evident that the patient was imagining herself a foetus in the maternal body—but this idea itself did not cause anxiety. Indeed, on the contrary, this was an idea of safety or defense. The anxiety arose when the defensive wall was threatened, that is to say, when the penis entered or threatened to touch her. This case therefore answers one aspect of the question posed above as to what it is that the claustrophobic fears. The intrauterine fantasy is one of defense (flight) and relief from anxiety; the anxiety arises with the idea of being disturbed or dislodged by the father or father's penis.

A second anxiety situation arises when the intracorporal status is interrupted by the fantasy of being born. The patient described above, after being comfortably settled in her bedroom and after becoming aware of her conflict and what it was she was fleeing, decided to come out. This she did symbolically by moving her belongings back into her sitting room, to the accompaniment of typical dreams of being born, needless

to relate here, from which she would awake in anxiety; and at the level of the current situation, after this symbolical rearrangement, she was able to make a psychological rearrangement as well. She entered her first love affair and was deflorated at her next menstruation.

Briefly then this case showed that the idea of being a child within the mother is a defense fantasy, and that while this idea is sustained there is no anxiety. The anxiety appears linked to one of two contingencies: The first of these is of being dislodged or disturbed by parental coitus, by the father's penis or by his pressure on the mother's body (and it is this latter version that determines the central claustrophobic symptoms we would call classical); or of being born. This second idea—of birth—has numerous connotations and is sometimes reducible to the first situation according to the fantastic tocology: I am being forced out of mother by father's pushing on her abdomen.

In the case under discussion, the birth process was supposed to be started by the father according to the enema principle: father in coitus urinates into mother's anus and the mother expelling the urine flushes the child out with it. (A variant of this idea has the mother bursting open from being overfilled with water.)

The infantile material in this patient concerned an observation of parental intercourse (reconstructed from screen memories) and memories of her mother's pregnancy and the birth of a sibling when the patient was three years old. Early masturbation was accompanied by ideas of parental coitus with herself in the uterus. Obviously, some information concerning coitus and pregnancy is needed to give rise to such fantasies. During her analysis then, the fear of a male approach reactivated the fears attaching to these early fantasies. Dr. Monroe A. Meyer has told me of a case of true claustrophobia in which it was found that as a child the patient had actually retired into enclosed spaces to masturbate; I should interpret this as probably an acting out of the ideas referred to above.

In another case a puberty claustrophobia was combined with a fear of going blind. This patient slept for many years in the



parental bedroom, was constantly present at, and aware of, parental intercourse, and barely missed witnessing the birth of a younger child. This patient's anxiety attacks were especially marked by the attendant almost asthmatic difficulty in breathing, and it was from her that I learned an interesting theory of how a baby breathes while it is in the mother's body. The baby lies in the body immersed in water. When the mother urinates the water is partly drained off and its level sinks. The baby's head floats at the top, like the bell float in an old fashioned water-closet tank. The water-closet tank, indeed, suggested the theory. The baby's head comes up as it were for air, the baby inhales, and as in the tank the water gradually rises and immerses the head again completely. Another patient came upon precisely the same idea, which played an important rôle in furnishing the latent content for early anxiety dreams. In these dreams the patient was under water rising to the surface, but her head always met the bottom of a boat or some structure that prevented its coming to the surface. The later neurosis of this patient, which unfortunately cannot be reported, affected chiefly the respiratory function.

The questions that arise in the child's mind concerning the embryo, its origin and physiology, its life in the uterus, and the cause of its ultimate birth, with the infantile and childhood theories designed to answer these questions leave their mark in fantasy, dream and symptom. In the illustrations given above I have pointed out the prominence of skin and respiratory phenomena attending the fantasy of being a foetus. Skin and chest sensations are particularly prominent in claustrophobic anxiety. Several analytic observers have been struck by the erotic skin and respiratory phenomena of early infancy and some have speculated on intrauterine libido organizations dominated by the skin or by the apnoëic respiratory tract. Aside from this, however, there is no doubt about the prominence of these two fields in connection with the *fantasy* of being in the mother, and they are bound up with ideas concerning the tactile sensations and the breathing of the foetus.

The process which initiates the fantasy of being in the

mother's body is the familiar one of partial identification through oral incorporation. In several instances the fantasy was preceded by active oral aggression. This was true historically in the case reported at the beginning of this paper, where the mother's pregnancy led the three-year-old girl to bite everything and everybody in tantrum-like rages. The latent wish is to bite or destroy the foetus by an oral attack. The fantasy gratification of this wish leads to an identification with the foetus, thought of as a quasi-part of the mother's body. In some instances of this identification process, a checking of the oral-sadistic wish led to its reversal into the opposite,—that is, a wish to be eaten by the mother, but with the same consequences, for after being ingested the wisher found himself in the mother's body in place of the foetus. In one case this reversal was indicated in a series of dreams, in the first of which coitus with the pregnant woman was undertaken with a "biting penis", a snake, later with a rat; finally after the reversal, by means of a cucumber, which disappeared for good. In an interesting footnote in her book *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (p. 329), Melanie Klein remarks that claustrophobic anxiety, in some forms, appears to be connected with the idea of being shut up within the mother, which may be then deflected and limited to the genital, so that it consists in a fear of being unable to disengage the penis. She relates this to the infantile fear of both parents united in coitus and of being castrated by the father's penis in the mother's body. This finding would not be at variance with the ideas put forward in my account, namely, that the entrance into the mother is conceived as an eating or a being eaten. Indeed fantasies of entering the mother through some other portal than the mouth are quite probably distortions of this one.

The central claustrophobic fantasy according to the definition we are using is the fear of being expelled from the mother's body by the crushing, flushing, or other activity of the father. From this would radiate certain other combinations of ideas concerning coitus and the mother's body that would give rise to related fears. Thus, the fear of entering an



enclosed space, as in the case reported by Oberndorf,<sup>1</sup> has among its latent ideas the one that the enclosure is the mother's body; however, the person who fears to enter does not identify himself with a foetus but with a phallus. Yet the underlying dynamics are very similar, for the identification with the foetus or with the penis is of the same sort,—an identification of the person's body with a part (or quasi-part) of another person through a fantasied oral ingestion of this part.

The identification of one's self with the penis may instructively be compared with the identification with a foetus. Both originate through an oral incorporation of the "part" and the ensuing identification with it.<sup>2</sup> But the penis and its functions are well known, whereas the foetus and its behavior, how it lives and breathes, are in the main unknown and only to be guessed at by the inquisitive child. Thus it is that in contrast with the almost uniform ideas concerning the penis and what it can do, the ideas as to what the foetus is like and what the foetus can do are very diverse.

Claustrophobic anxiety, to summarize, is correlated with the idea of being disturbed while an embryo in the mother's body, especially by parental coitus. The antecedent of the fantasy of being a foetus is an oral aggression against a real foetus, which leads to an incorporation of and identification with the foetus, the incorporation and identification being of the type known as "partial"; and the fantasy takes its form and ideational content from early childhood theories of gestation, embryology and birth.

<sup>1</sup> Oberndorf, Clarence P.: *Analysis of a Claustrophobia*. Medical Record, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> See Lewin, Bertram D.: *The Body as Phallus*. This QUARTERLY II, 1933.

# FAIRY TALES AND NEUROSIS

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In a paper entitled *The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales*, written in 1913, Freud hints at the relation that exists between fairy tales and neuroses. In that paper, Freud tells of the dreams of a patient and of the fairy tales which were produced as associations to the dreams. He also suggests the relation between fairy tales and early childhood history: "It is not surprising to find that psychoanalysis confirms us in our recognition of how great an influence folk fairy tales have upon the mental life of our children. In some people a recollection of their favorite fairy tales takes the place of memories of their own childhood: they have made the fairy tales into screen memories."

It is obvious that fairy tales have a constructive value; they fulfil children's wishes: they have the same structure as dreams, and their content is really nothing more than the disguised realization of wishes. In addition to their appeal to children we cannot lose sight of the fact that fairy tales may also satisfy an inner need of adult story tellers, and that they may provide adults with an outlet for the tension resulting from conflicts.

It is difficult to take any definite stand concerning the possible harmful influence of fairy tales on the child. To say that fairy tales can be of use in education, that they help to broaden the imagination of the child, that they widen his mental horizon, that they have a play value, that they give the child an opportunity to solve his conflicts with his parents by identification—is all true. But as my case history will show, under certain circumstances the fairy tale may cause harm and produce a traumatic effect. It may become a permanent pattern for escape and may confuse the mental life of a child, leaving permanent injuries that inhibit future adjustment. It

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should be emphasized, however, that in such a case the effects are bound up with the child's whole environment, with his position in the family, his relation to his parents and siblings, and that the fairy tales may be no more than a strong contributing factor in the causation of the neurosis.

The case which I will present bears witness to the ways in which the structure of a whole neurosis can be based on folklore material, and the ways in which these stories can be a factor in creating and maintaining anxiety in adult life (they are unquestionably a factor in childhood). The same fairy tales which served once in childhood as a wish fulfilment, and which were of use in the solution of the œdipus conflict of the child may become a source of suffering in the adult. They may become objects of fear, keeping the patient in a steady panic, as an ego defense against his instinctive sexual urges.

In the case history to be presented the adult life of the patient was permeated with threads of folk tales which led back to early childhood actualities when stories were told to him by his mother. During childhood the patient had had an infantile neurosis which disappeared spontaneously. In puberty it was the cause of many neurotic behavior patterns. In his present adult neurosis both the scars of the infantile neurosis and the puberty difficulties became reactivated; and as the layers covering his past life were removed, it was found that the distortion of reality in his adult state was connected with the distortion of reality by fairy tales in childhood. The hidden material of early childhood experiences was concerned with emotional maladjustment to his parents, which centered around his œdipus situation, and was bound up with very strong castration anxiety.

The patient to whom I refer was in his thirties—accomplished in his social and economic status—but the city streets on which he moved, the house where he lived, the meadows and forests where he played golf, and the lakes where he went fishing, were all filled for him with giants, ogres, witches, and strange animals. In his daily routine life he seemed to come across friends whose faces at times appeared bird-like,

and whose noses protruded like beaks. In his dreams the fairy-tale structure of early childhood expanded to an even greater degree. Strange, prehistoric animals reaching through the window, big and baby elephants, snakes, the wolf of Little Red Riding Hood, all were present, and gave rise to preoccupation with fear-fantasies during the day. The happenings of his actual daily life became distorted in his mind and suggested unreality when he tried to check fantasies and to hide desires arising in the course of his routine activities. He was forced to escape to a fairy world as a protection against the same instinctive desires which had been present in early childhood and which had been strengthened by his mother who told him those stories. In his childhood he had been fascinated by the strange tales, and the uglier reality which grew upon him had been warded off and made pleasant by the fictitious stories. In his adulthood his craving for that early reality, when he was alone with mother, still persisted, and the strongest desire of his unconscious was to escape back to his childhood. In childhood he was the hero of all fairy tales. His vivid imagination was strengthened by the mother's attitude of belonging solely to him. In manhood, his unconscious strivings were so powerful in the direction of childhood that they kept him a child in relation to reality. He was still the center of the fairy tales, but as a sufferer.

When he came to analysis he was obsessed with fears. In the office the typewriter keys looked like animals' teeth; in the midst of his work he was afraid his heart would stop beating; in his business dealings he feared he might lose his voice and bark like a dog. When walking on the street he was afraid that people would look like horses or birds. When driving at night the spare tires of the car in front of him, illuminated by the reflector of his car, appeared to be a huge and frightful face. He feared that he would not recognize the members of his family when he arrived home. At other times, he feared that he would forget who he was or that he would become blind, or that he would see people disintegrate. When shaving he felt that the barber might cut his face, or that the vibrating



apparatus would look like a human head. All his fears were prominently connected with his eyesight.

The complaints for which he sought treatment had existed for about ten years in a mild degree. They started when his first child, a son, was born, when he experienced for the first time a feeling that his heart would stop beating. Later he suffered from almost continually blurred vision. I shall try to give you a short history of the case, and to condense the daily analysis of two years. I wish to remark here that the patient left treatment over three years ago, and since then has been well adjusted.

The only remaining son of wealthy parents, the patient stopped school at the age of seventeen because he wanted to start in business and make a great amount of money, so that he might retire at about the age of thirty-five and from then on live primarily for pleasure. He had had a younger brother who died at the age of four, when the patient himself was six. Our patient used to play with his brother, especially sexual games, which at that age were already being indulged in with other boys and girls. The games usually consisted of sucking each other's breasts and exploring each other's genitalia, especially the girls'. He always wondered that the girls found his but that he did not find theirs.

He remembers that time as having been the happiest of his life, since his father's travels and business used to permit his being alone with the mother. It was particularly the late afternoon hours which were pleasurable, when he sat at dusk by the window with his mother, looking out, and mother would tell him fairy stories. Most of them were about good fairies, but some were about witches who changed themselves or who had the power to change human beings into animals. Naturally, all the fairy stories carried a moral implication. The patient particularly remembered the tale of Pinocchio, and his mother's assurance that good little boys got their reward as Pinocchio did; but there was also the other side of the story, when the cricket would whisper constantly in his ear that "bad boys who rebelled against their parents would never get along in the world".

Beneath the pleasures of these early years ran a current of resentment against both his parents. This current, not recalled by the patient until it was revealed by analysis, was bound up with his peculiar situation with respect to his father and mother. He bore little affection for his father—because he never saw much of him; rather, he felt almost a hatred arising from the fact that his father came between him and his mother, and from the fact that the father was responsible for the birth of his younger brother, of whom the patient had been jealous.

His masturbatory activities with both girls and boys continued from early childhood up to and through adolescence. At the age of ten or eleven he was seduced by, and slept with, a servant girl. She played with his penis and he sucked her breasts. He still adhered to the fantasy, then, that women have only one opening, located in the rear. (The significance of this I shall make clear later). In his adolescence, being well developed and powerful, he began to go out with girls early, but never had sexual intercourse. Usually, on rides or outings, he got them to masturbate him. His apparently strong development along masculine lines so early proved to be a pretense and was a result of a disproportionately rapid libidinal development and slow ego development, both due to his peculiar relationship to his mother. That is why he could never handle his libidinal urges adequately; and that is why his early masculine development did not last.

At the age of eighteen he had his steady girl, whom he felt obliged to marry, though his parents opposed the marriage on account of his age. He finally married her when he was not quite twenty-two; she was somewhat older.

From the beginning of his marriage he was troubled with *ejaculatio præcox*, and to satisfy his wife he sometimes practiced cunnilingus. Very soon after his marriage he began to be troubled with various mild anxieties, all concerning his health. He constantly went to doctors to be examined. Twice or three times a year he would be laid up with a cold. He was very much concerned with his stomach functions and his



bowel movements. All during the time of his married life he did not give up the idea of trying extra-marital sexual relationships, but he never came to the point of actually trying. He did make acquaintances, and received a certain amount of gratification by discussing sexual matters with women, or at times by petting them, but he always stopped there, usually ending by having an emission. As time went on, he became more and more irritated with his wife, and when his first child was born his anxieties broke out in full force. That was the beginning of the period when anxiety connected with the fairy tale material of his childhood began to torment him in his daily life.

It became clear in analysis that the connection between his anxiety attack and the birth of the child was due primarily to his having become a father. Analogous in a way to post partum psychoses in women, or to depressions in men which develop after marriage, or when they become parents, our patient could not bear the realization of his strong early childhood desires to take the father's place, and when in actuality he became a parent, he could not enjoy it. His wife was a real substitute mother to him, not only because she was somewhat older, but also because her attitude was more that of a mother than a wife. He became obsessed with the idea of leaving his wife—an obsession accompanied by a very strong sense of guilt because it involved the unwelcome child as well as the wife. He was jealous and resentful of his child, whom he identified with his dead young brother, whose presence in early childhood he had not wished because it interfered with having mother and mother's affection all to himself.

These fantasies together with his constant sexual tension did not allow him a moment's rest. When walking in the streets he constantly stared at women, even turning to look at them, although he realized that a man in his social position would be an object of much criticism if observed in such activity. Then his vision became blurred, and the fear of going blind developed as a protection against looking and desiring. Whenever under sexual urge he found himself staring at women in

the street, the blurred feeling of his eyes turned him away from those drives and preoccupied him with himself.

He disliked coming home from business. The fear of not recognizing the members of his family was indicative of his strong desire to be away from them, and the resentment he felt against them. The same fear concerned his own parents. The elderly business associates whose noses appeared to him changed into birdlike beaks were all father representatives, reminding him of his father's sexual superiority and reviving in him a fear of castration.

An interesting indication of this strong castration fear was the retention even until puberty of the idea that women have but one opening, and that in the back. This idea had served (as proved by analysis) as a defense against his powerful castration anxieties. It is well known that little boys often adhere in their unconscious to the notion that women have a penis—an idea that spares them the fear of castration when they discover the anatomical difference between boys and girls, and find that little girls have no penis. The fear of meeting the same fate as the little girl, who originally had a penis which was cut off, and whose vagina is a wound resulting from that castration, is thus allayed. By denying any kind of genital in the female, our patient eliminated even the slightest possibility of the fear of castration.

During adulthood, the sport diversions of the patient were all more or less sexualized, as childhood games so often are. When he was putting on the golf course—he won many prizes in tournaments—the smoke stacks in the far distance appeared like a huge animal, the little house on the outskirts of the course like a human face, and he was seized with an irresistible diarrhoea so that he had to rush back to the club house. I may mention here that golf was the only field in which he was superior to his father, and that at the root of that anxiety we again see the returning castration anxiety.

His outstanding fear that the faces of people might change found an interesting explanation. It meant that they would change and look angry, since for him normal faces were always



smiling ones. It led back to the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood where the wolf took the place of the grandmother, and the fear that faces would change had to do primarily with the mother as the original castrator. He must be a good boy to keep mother smiling, to keep her love, and to prevent her from turning into the unfriendly wolf. Back of all these fears there was a strong dread of both parents. The fear that mother's face would change also led to an actual memory: he remembered how sad mother's face was when she was telling him the stories, sitting at the window, and he connected that sadness with waiting for father. His strong distrust of women led back unconsciously to that memory. He was loved by his mother, but it was an incomplete love since she was waiting for another man. As the patient himself put it: "We are sitting at the window at dusk, she telling stories but waiting for father to come back; and when he came both would go out leaving me alone, at the same time comforting me, telling me not to cry, saying that I should be a nice child. I succeeded in making scenes at times to keep them at home."

Advanced in manhood, he was still laboring with the difficulties of his early oedipus situation. The fears connected with his sexual urges, with the desire to possess a woman, were paralleled by his desire of early childhood to possess the mother. In childhood he had to be good if he were to receive the reward of his mother's love, like the hero of the fairy tale. Thus the one real danger in childhood—losing the mother—was warded off. In his present adult life the desire for a woman became prominent once again, and with the desire came the recollection of fairy tale incidents. These in turn brought anxieties which emphasized the dangers of his adult desires. The woman could be, as in the tale, both the good fairy and the cruel witch, and the father could also be a mighty giant, at times benevolent, at other times severe and punishing. The fairy tales in childhood had helped him in the temporary solution of his conflicts and fears, especially because his mother's attitude was always kind and protecting. They had helped him also to be a good boy, and beloved. In his adult

life the fear of the fairy tale material resulted in the same correcting of tendencies which he had been taught to consider antisocial.

In childhood the fairy tale served to ease and partly to solve his difficulties concerning his œdipus conflict. At the present his fantasies and fears served the same purpose but without success, because the œdipus situation had originally been solved only in part. The most that they could accomplish was to make him compliant through anxieties, just as in early childhood his castration fear had made him a compliant and dependent child.

The lack of self-confidence was a result of the chaos which his emotions created in his unconscious. The fairy tales in childhood had served to mitigate the conflict between the desires aiming at possession of the mother and the severity of his superego. They could not serve in the same way in his maturity.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize the fact, which must be clear from the case presented, that fairy tales *per se* do not cause a neurosis. The fertile soil of early childhood conflicts is already present before the fairy tale contributes to the development of the neurosis, effecting an intensification of the conflicts. The fable may then under given circumstances turn into an inhibition. But that fairy tales may help the child in the solution of conflicts which arise from the œdipus situation is also true. The good or ill effect of fairy stories rests largely on the circumstances under which they are related to the child.

The story must obviously be suited to the child's age and condition. Care should be taken that the tale is told in the proper physical and psychological setting. The time of day when the story telling takes place is, of course, important (for example, no ogre story before bed time). Even such a minor detail as voice modulation should be given careful consideration. Above all, the story teller should be certain that the tale is told for the child, and not out of a sense of duty, or merely to relieve certain tensions of his own.

In the case cited, the patient's mother was herself of the



timid, apprehensive type. To sit at the window and tell her boy fairy stories while waiting for her husband had a comforting effect and relieved the tension within her. As for our patient, analysis revealed that the circumstances under which the fairy tales were told were equivalent to a seduction, and instead of helping him in the solution of his œdipus conflict, the stories brought him still closer to his mother and provided a secret means of pleasure in common with her every evening before he went to bed. This is why the feeling of guilt in connection with sex became so strong in the patient. Thus we see that lack of caution and necessary consideration for the child may mean that the fairy tale becomes the source of a constant traumatic reaction in his later life.

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# WORDS AND MASSES: A PICTORIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STAMMERING

BY WILLIAM J. SPRING (NEW YORK)

Recently I was shown a number of pictures which children had made with a paint which has the consistency of mud. The children were told only to cover the paper with paint; they then chose their own colors and applied the paint to moistened paper with their hands. Among the paintings were those of a ten-year-old boy, who had stammered severely since the age of five. The history of these paintings was told me by the teacher in whose class he painted them, a woman of exceptional intuition, but with no technical psychoanalytic knowledge.

## 1.

The boy was sent to this teacher from another art class, where he had a reputation for being irritable and for accidentally tipping over pots of paint. He came unwillingly at first and for several days made no attempt to touch the paints; he stood about and criticized the work of the other children, who often made fun of him because of his stammering. He seemed quite inaccessible. He even gave the teacher a false last name, saying that it was Vanderbilt. After a few days he slyly put his fingers in the paint belonging to another boy, when he thought he was not being observed. After a while he began putting paint on his own paper, selecting chiefly black and brown, or if he began with bright colors, mixing them together to make brown. He piled more paint on the paper than was necessary. He showed contempt for his own work and always asked to have it thrown away; his teacher, however, persuaded him to save it. He showed envious admiration for the paintings of another boy of the same age whose work was generally admired. He often made this other

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From the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital.



boy angry by standing at his table, but when he tried to produce similar pictures himself he only succeeded in making smudges. After a while he began to take very obvious pleasure in smearing.

He remained reserved and irritable. He splashed other children when washing the table, often bumped into tables unnecessarily, and continued to criticize the other children's work. He seemed tense. He had a habit of buckling and unbuckling his belt and running his hand around inside it, which he later explained by saying that the belt was too tight and that it had to be to keep his trousers from falling down.

This continued for about two months. He came in of his own volition at irregular intervals, worked alone and said little, continuing to produce exclusively blacks and browns and making no recognizable pictures. One day he suddenly burst into the room at a time when he should not have been in the class and immediately hid behind the door. The teacher took this as a matter of course and offered him a chance to paint if he wanted to. Gradually he became more friendly. One day overhearing a conversation between the teacher and other pupils about the paint, he was very much interested to learn that the teacher made the paints herself and asked if he might go with her when she dug the mud. He then became more interested in the teacher and asked her many questions about herself.

After about two months he produced the first picture here shown. He called it "A Conversation between Two Women in the Next Room". He began by taking four bright colors and mixing them together to produce a dark reddish brown; then he made the background and touched it in many places with the sides of his hands, saying, "These are the words. Haven't you ever heard them? The words drop out of their mouths like this, and they all sound alike." He looked up slyly as he said this, and joined heartily in the teacher's laughter. This was the first painting he asked to have preserved. The teacher said, "We will keep it in your portfolio", to which he answered, "You may have that one". Later on

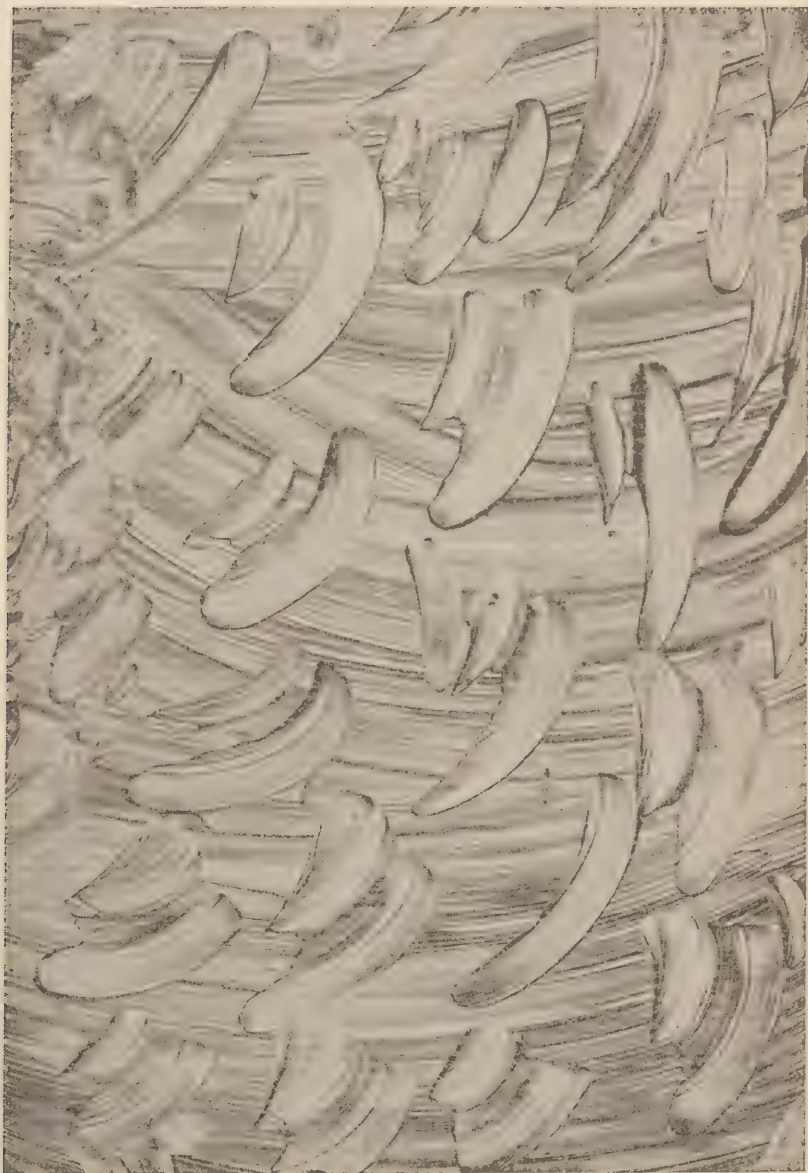


FIGURE I

"A Conversation between Two Women in the Next Room"



whenever he looked through his pictures he reminded the teacher that this picture was hers. It was also at this time that he first confessed his right name.

From this point on he became more confidential. The teacher found that if she lightly touched his shoulder it was easier for him to talk. For the following two or three weeks he continued to paint "words" in blacks and browns. He said that all words really have shapes and painted the shapes of different words for the teacher in brown paint. One that he painted was the word "She". He painted two globes and connected them with a double line, remarking after a while, "Why that looks like a dumbbell". A moment later he almost shouted, "*She* is like a dumbbell!", and laughed heartily.

He spent several weeks drawing the shapes of words and discussing them with the teacher. These paintings were all done in brown. Some of the words had shapes like the objects for which they stood—for example, to the word "house" he gave the shape of a house—but for most words the shapes did not bear this relation to their meanings.

During this period he formed the habit of lingering a while after the other children had gone so as to discuss himself with the teacher. He told her for instance that the other children did not like him because he smelled. He actually did have an unpleasant odor both from his breath and from his perspiration, and the teacher utilized this opportunity to give him friendly suggestions about cleanliness. He was not offended, but brought the subject up again and again himself. One day he complained that his belly was uncomfortable. He boasted about how much he had eaten, but complained of feeling "tight", kept opening and shutting his belt buckle and putting his hand under his belt. The teacher asked if he had been to the bathroom. He was surprised, and answered irritably, "No, I didn't want to go to the bathroom! I haven't been to the bathroom for three days." The teacher said, "Why everybody has to go to the bathroom. Nobody feels right if he doesn't take care of that." "You too?" the boy asked. "Of course", she answered, "I have to take care of

myself." This topic also was discussed repeatedly, the boy always bringing it up himself, the teacher always sympathetic, suggesting cathartics and emphasizing that everybody has such matters to take care of.

Shortly after this, while painting "shapes of words", he said, "You know, that's why I stutter. My throat is round, and lots of easy words come through like sausages. Some words are liquid, but when I get a word with a corner on it or a square word it sticks in my throat and I have to change the shape of my throat so they'll slip through. Sometimes I have to change my jaw or my face around and sometimes I have to put my hand on my throat."

The teacher was very enthusiastic about this idea and persuaded him to tell it into the dictaphone, which he did with great difficulty. But he continued, between paintings, to talk into the dictaphone, at first devoting himself wholly to telling about the shapes of different words. On the day after he began telling the dictaphone about the shapes of words he ceased painting shapes of words. His whole style of painting changed; for the first time he used bright colors; he produced the second painting here shown, "A Story". This is almost wholly in bright pink, though there are areas of green in it. His comment was, "Some people, when they look at it this way would think it was a tree, and some people who look at it this way would think it was a lobster, but you know and I know what it is, and it makes no difference what they think." He said it was a story. He said the little curved lines near the margin and the long clawlike streamers were words.

For about a month he repeated essentially the same picture over and over, but in all different bright colors. He gave the pictures such names as "Night Desert", "Sahara Desert", "The Wind", "Blue Desert", but it was definitely understood that these names were only for other people,—the teacher and he knew the picture was "really a story". During the same time he began to be able to do "swirls" similar to those of the other boy whom he had envied before. In these, he took great joy. He often dipped his whole forearm in the paint, saying, "Seel I'm boxing!"





FIGURE II  
"A Story"

During this time he was talking into the dictaphone each class period. Very much afraid at first that he would break the machine, on his early records he stammered so badly that they could not be understood. He was very much upset at "wasting records", but he soon learned to take pleasure in shaving off the records he had "wasted" and cleaning up the wax powder thus produced. Soon he learned to shut off the machine when he stammered badly so as to preserve only the good part of his speech, and in the course of about a month he was able to speak into the machine almost without stammering.

At first he devoted all the records to descriptions of the shapes of words; for instance, "Words have shapes. If a word is spoken, then it has a shape; but if it has come out and is written down, then it doesn't have a shape. 'Hour' is big and round in the middle and has four little knobs on each end. . . . Fear is a word that has a line and two little knobs on the ends of it." He said that the name of a certain teacher, whom he disliked, had "many prickles on it", and that this was why he stammered so when he tried to say it. It was not actually a difficult name to pronounce. The word "home" had many jagged edges. The name of the painting teacher was "liquid", and he did not stammer over it.

After a while he began to "tell stories" into the dictaphone. He began with very prosaic remarks, such as "My name is —. I go to the — school", but shortly after this he told a story which he called 'The Adventures of a Pencil at the — School'. The story began, "I am a lead pencil at the store of the — school." The remainder of the story told how this pencil was bought by a boy, and recited the events of the boy's school day. These events were apparently actual occurrences at the school, and had no apparent emotional connection with each other. Beyond "I am a pencil" there was no further fantasy. The interest of this story lies in the fact that on the day he told it he had himself bought a pencil in the school store and given it to the teacher. This gift was only one in a series beginning some time before. His first two gifts were the two pictures here reproduced, the "Conversation" and the "Story".



After the conversation about his stammering, that is, while he was painting "stories" and telling the dictaphone about the shapes of words, he presented the teacher with a broken crayon taken from another teacher. He was asked to return it but was helped to find out where these crayons came from and to get some by a more regular route. He then began bringing in a series of small presents, all intrinsically worthless, bits of rope six to eight inches long, or pieces of colored paper. These he would himself drop into the teacher's pocket. She always received them with signs of pleasure and thanked him. The pencil was the first gift of any value.

He later told what the teacher calls "fantastic stories" about a place he would like to go to in the country, where there are rocks, flowers and great trees, and where he might lie under the sky looking at the trees. Unfortunately these records are not preserved and his teacher cannot recall the details of these stories. When he began to tell stories, he stopped talking about the shapes of words.

During the same period the teacher asked him to demonstrate the method of painting to adult visitors, which he usually did very well, except that with some visitors he stammered badly and asked to be excused. The ones with whom he stammered most were people he disliked. He also was asked to instruct younger children in the use of the dictaphone, which he enjoyed.

Toward his teacher he became more and more friendly. Several times he asked her to put her hand on his throat to help a word through. In the morning when he came in he often said to her, "Oh Miss —, I've been!", referring to the conversation about going to the bathroom. While this was going on a marked improvement was noticed in his stammering. While at first it was often impossible to understand him, he improved so much that with the teacher he hardly stammered at all. With other people also there was a marked improvement, but with certain ones whom he disliked he still stammered badly, as he noticed himself, and he remarked that he still stammered badly at home.

One day he asked his teacher to come to a party at his house, where some pictures painted by his grandfather were on view. He said, "I want to be an artist too, like my grandfather. Grandfather, you know, is my mother's father, and he can make her do things, because she is his child." When the teacher told him she would love to go but that his mother would have to invite her, he was greatly stricken and said, "You aren't going to fail me, are you?" The invitation was not extended, but the day of the party he called the teacher several times on the telephone, before he finally forgave her for not coming.

Shortly after this he invited the teacher to go to the movies with him. She agreed to go, but made it clear that if one invites people one has to spend one's own money, adding that it needn't be an expensive picture. He was taken aback because he had expected her to pay for it. Nevertheless he decided to save money and often discussed what picture they would see. However, his mother forbade him to go.

About this time the class was visited by a man who has a school in Boston. The boy was much interested in this school. Among other questions he asked whether they had nice toilets there for the boys, and upon receiving a satisfactory answer said that he wanted to go to that school. He spoke a great deal about being "friends" with this man and when the latter went away insisted on presenting him with several paintings.

Shortly after this it occurred to him that he would like to send some of his pictures to all of the visitors whom he had liked. He went through the visitors' book and apparently remembered all the visitors who had come. He had no hesitation in deciding which he had liked and which he had not; he selected and wrapped up pictures for each of those he had liked and wrote the addresses. Then he realized that the postage would amount to some seventy cents, and asked the teacher, "You wouldn't want to pay the postage, would you?" The teacher explained that when one gives presents one



usually spends one's own money. He was rather pained, but decided to save up. After a while the principal of the school wanted some of these paintings for demonstration. The boy was allowed to decide himself what he would do about it. He finally decided, "After all I like them, but how do I know that they like me?" and sent away only three or four pictures, but at his own expense.

Shortly after this he invited the teacher to spend the summer with him in the country. He said, "We can lie on the hillsides and talk about all sorts of things." She said she could not, since she had to go to Europe; whereupon he asked to go along. He was told that for that money was necessary, and that when he got older and earned money he would be able to take such trips.

At the end of the year, his mother removed him from the school on the ground that he was "too nervous" to stay in the city. His wish to go to the school in Boston was denied on the ground that it would cost too much money. The emotional situation at home never became known to the teacher, since the boy never discussed it and the mother never showed any interest in meeting the teacher. However, it is not difficult to guess the mother's motives. That the boy preferred the teacher to his mother is obvious from his invitations and his wish to go to Europe with her. When he had said goodbye to the teacher, he got out of the elevator on the floor below and ran back to say, "I'm saying goodbye, but we're friends."

## 2.

The chief reason for relating this story is the unusually vivid illustration of the unconscious identification of words with *fæces*, which is usual in severe stammerers. Fenichel<sup>1</sup> states in his section on stuttering, "The fundamental pleasure in stuttering is the pleasure of playing with words, which analysis has found repeatedly to be a continuation of infantile

<sup>1</sup> Fenichel, Otto: *Outline of Clinical Psychoanalysis*. This QUARTERLY II, 1933. P. 93.

playing with fæces, displaced from below upward . . . the words being held back, as fæces were held back in infancy, to produce an autoerotic pleasure." It would be difficult to find a clearer example of this than the fantasy which this boy shows. Words are masses which have shape. Some words come out like sausages and some are liquid. In getting out words which are difficult he asks the manual help of the woman who has helped him with his actual constipation, and it is directly following discussions of constipation that he reveals his idea that the stammering is due to difficulty in getting out words with difficult shapes. The shapes of words are invariably painted in black and brown. The shapes which the words have in the first picture, "A Conversation between Two Women in the Next Room" are undeniably fæcal. Moreover his discussion, "Haven't you heard them? The words drop out of their mouths like this and they sound just alike", strongly suggests an actual experience of listening to defæcation. That the idea involved an insult to women is shown by the sly way in which he told it, and by his delighted laughter when the teacher was amused. The idea that words are fæces appeared first in a projected form, that is, applied to two women in the next room rather than to himself.

There is another characteristic of stammerers which is illustrated by this boy. Fenichel states,<sup>1</sup> "The words have in addition the significance of an introjected object. . . . The conflict which originally took place between the individual and the object is now expressed . . . by means of a conflict between the ego and its speech apparatus or its speech products, as the case may be." The patient stammered very severely over the name of a teacher whom he disliked. He said this name "had prickles on it". This clearly expressed the fear of being injured internally by the hated object, the name being the equivalent of the object. The name of a loved object on the contrary is "liquid" and therefore not dangerous, and pronounced without stammering. The fact that "'She' is

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* P. 103.



a dumbbell" and "She" is a word over which he stammers very severely fits in with this. That the "She" who is the object of his hatred is his mother there is considerable indirect evidence.

The most striking differences between the second series of pictures, the "stories", and the first series of "shapes of words" of which the "Conversation" was the first, is in the form which is given to the "words". In the whole series of "stories" the words come out as long streamers, instead of disjointed pieces. It does not seem forced to correlate this very definite difference with his ambition during this period, namely, to speak freely without breaking up his speech into individual words. It was this same ambition which he was gradually fulfilling on the dictaphone. This ambition might be expressed as "I would rather be able to tell whole stories than just to push out one word at a time". It is significant that on the dictaphone he stopped giving "shapes of words" when he was able to tell stories. But he painted "stories" for some time before he was able to tell them.

The fact that in all these painted stories the words emerge as streamers from the end of an object like a tree trunk suggests a deeper phallic and urethral exhibitionistic meaning. If this is true, the tree trunk represents not only a penis, but also a body. He is himself the elongated object from the end of which words emerge. This assumption is confirmed by one of the earliest stories he told into the dictaphone. This story begins "I am a pencil". A pencil is also an elongated object from the end of which words emerge. Lewin<sup>1</sup> describes two stammerers in whom identification of the body with a phallus led to "urethralization" and "analization" of the mouth and "excrementalization" of the flow of speech, and so to stammering. In Lewin's cases the identification of body and phallus was the result of a desire to castrate the phallic mother by incorporation of her phallus, followed by identification with it. The data indicate a similar mechanism in this case. On the day he told the pencil story he gave his teacher a pencil.

<sup>1</sup> Lewin, Bertram D.: *The Body as Phallus*. This QUARTERLY II, 1933. P. 39.

This pencil was only one of a series of presents. The first of these presents was a broken crayon, which he had stolen from another woman teacher, whom he disliked.

The step from giving a stolen crayon to giving a pencil, which has been bought and paid for, represents a definite progression with the appearance of genital elements. He slipped the pencil himself into his teacher's pocket. But the oral component still broke through in his story, "I am a pencil". Even in his most strongly genitally tinged wish, the invitation to the teacher to lie with him on the hillsides, the genital wish is expressed in oral terms. He says "to lie on the hillsides and *talk* about all sorts of things".

3.

To begin working in black and brown is the usual reaction of children from refined homes. When these paints were given to a group of street boys in Paris most of them began immediately to use bright colors. But in children of upper class families, apparently, the sense of guilt about direct smearing must be overcome before the sublimation is possible.

In this boy the first painting which can really be called a picture was also the first which was not in brown. It was made immediately after his description of why he stuttered, at the end of a period in which he had been able to repeat his training in cleanliness and to accept it. This training was carried out by the teacher with great unconscious skill. Essentially she invited him to identify himself with her by saying that all people smell badly if they do not wash and feel ill if they do not move their bowels, and by freely admitting that she herself was no different in this respect. Thereafter he was able to express his anal interest directly in boasting of having been to the toilet, and later in asking the visiting teacher about the toilets in his school. However, this interest was in the socially acceptable form of defæcation, in the toilet. And he no longer expressed his anal expulsive wishes in the unacceptable form of knocking over paint pots or the inhibited but still

unacceptable form of buckling and unbuckling his trousers in public.

At the same time that the direct anal conflict became resolved and his ability to sublimate in painting increased, the conflict was transferred to the organs of speech. In working through this conflict on the dictaphone he again repeated the same stages he had gone through with the paints.

The surly and destructive, that is, sadistic, behavior which he showed when he began painting is represented in relation to the dictaphone by an anxiety. He was afraid he would break the dictaphone. He did spoil record after record by stammering and since he was trying to make records of his fantasies which were to be kept, this may be regarded as a sadistic destructive activity. That he so regarded it is shown by his repeated expressions of guilt over "wasting" the records. As his sense of guilt decreased he took delight in learning to shave the records, that is, to destroy what he had said. This is comparable to his desire to have his early paintings, which were no more than smears, destroyed. The period in which he painted "shapes of words", which intervened between the smears and the "stories", was also repeated on the dictaphone. His first records are devoted to describing "shapes of words" and the later ones to stories. It may be that the dictaphone is psychologically well adapted to working through anal conflicts which have been displaced to the speech function, for words may at the same time be expelled (spoken) and retained (recorded).

According to the teacher, five of six stammering children she has worked with showed marked improvement, though therapy was never a conscious aim. It would appear that an invitation to smear, with so unexceptionable a justification as the desire to produce a work of art, would offer the child a situation specially well suited to overcoming the sense of guilt connected with anal wishes. This teacher, being really interested in the paintings of children, could sincerely put a high value on the products of this smearing activity; and could thereby make them a source of object-directed gratification.



The faecal mass thus became raised to the level of a gift,<sup>1</sup> which made possible a partial resolution of the anal conflict, at least in relation to the teacher.

The dearth of information concerning the child's behavior at home is unfortunate. Apparently he did not overcome his hatred of his mother to any great extent, because he still stammered badly at home. It is possible also that the "nervousness" which caused his mother to remove him from the school consisted of openly rebellious behavior toward her. However, the development of an object libidinal, giving attitude, with a resulting improvement in stammering, must be regarded as an educational achievement even if that attitude appeared only in relation to a few objects. The question the boy asked of the visiting teacher concerning the toilets in the school in Boston shows that in his mind the ability to be "friends" depended on a permissive attitude in anal matters.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Freud: *On the Transformation of Instincts with Special Reference to Anal Erotism*. Coll. Papers II, 164. (Ges. Schr. V, 268.)

<sup>2</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Miss Ruth Faison Shaw for all the clinical data on which this paper is based.

# THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE

BY MARIE BONAPARTE (PARIS)

In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*,<sup>1</sup> the situation which confronted us in *The Man of the Crowd* is reversed. There we were introduced to the criminal but left in ignorance of the nature of his crime. Here the crime is known but not the criminal. The discovery of his identity, in fact, constitutes the theme of the tale, which is the forerunner of all modern detective fiction.

*The Murders in the Rue Morgue* was first published in April, 1841, in *Graham's Magazine*, the important new review which Graham had founded by amalgamating *Atkinson's Casket* with *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. *The Man of the Crowd* had appeared in the last named periodical three months before. A period of profound depression, following upon his rupture with Burton, had prevented Poe from assuming his duties as editor of *Graham's* at once, and during this interval no new tale had appeared from his pen.

We may ask ourselves with reason whether Poe's violent conflict with Burton—his outburst of savage hatred against this quondam employer, half man of affairs and half mountebank, who had sold his magazine to buy a circus—may not have determined the reactivation of the theme of the father's guilt observable in Poe's work at this time. There is reason to think, moreover, that Poe had begun to drink again, as Burton accused him of doing. In any case, it is certain that, beginning with *The Man of the Crowd*, and thus antedating Virginia's first attack of hæmoptysis in January, 1842, a new undercurrent of savagery, more sanguinary than anything that had gone before, made its appearance in Poe's work.

*The Murders in the Rue Morgue* opens with a somewhat confused dissertation upon "the mental features discoursed of as the analytical", in which Poe attempts to distinguish the powers of

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Edgar Poe, *Étude Psychanalytique*, published in Paris, les Editions Denoël et Steele, 1933.

<sup>1</sup> *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1841; 1843; 1845. The text of Poe used in this article is that of the Virginia Edition of his complete works, vol. 4. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1902.

*analysis*, in the highest sense, from mere ingenuity, or such skill in calculation as is necessary to the mathematician or the chess player.

Poe maintains that the successful player of whist has need of a higher degree of "analytic" ability than the player of chess, including in his definition of analysis the power of exact and subtle observation of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. After this preamble, Poe passes on to the narrative proper—"a commentary", as he calls it, "upon the propositions just advanced".

"Residing in Paris during the spring and part of the summer of 18—", he begins, "I there became acquainted with a Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin. This young gentleman was of an excellent—indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes." This might be a distant echo of the sentiments with which "General" Poe's grandson regarded his present position in life, with the difference that in his case—save, perhaps, during periods of depression such as that which he had just passed through after his rupture with Burton—the mirage of his great enterprise, the *Penn Magazine*, continued to entice his imagination with the vision of himself as a controlling force in American literary life. To Dupin, however, "by courtesy of his creditors, there still remained . . . a small remnant of his patrimony; and upon the income arising from this he managed, by means of a rigorous economy, to procure the necessities of life, without troubling himself about its superfluities. Books, indeed, were his sole luxuries. . . ." We might be taking a look into Mrs. Clemm's humble lodgings, where Poe's own books ranged on their shelves formed the only "luxury" of the household. Dupin's "small remnant of patrimony" and his "income", are additions to the picture which evidently represent wish fantasies on Poe's part. In his own case, Muddy's needle and her resourcefulness in providing for her family constituted his sole "patrimony", the only source of "income" that remained to him when work at Burton's came to a standstill or a fit of depression temporarily paralyzed his pen.

"Our first meeting was at an obscure library in the Rue Montmartre, where the accident of our both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume brought us into closer communion. We saw each other again and again. I was deeply interested in the little family history which he detailed to



me. . . . I was astonished, too, at the vast extent of his reading; and, above all, I felt my soul enkindled within me by the wild fervor, and the vivid freshness of his imagination. Seeking in Paris the objects I then sought, I felt that the society of such a man would be to me a treasure beyond price. . . ." Consequently the two friends decide to live together during the narrator's stay in the city; the latter, being in easier circumstances than Dupin, undertakes to furnish "in a style which suited the rather fantastic gloom of our common temper, a time-eaten and grotesque mansion, long deserted through superstitions into which we did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain.

"Had the routine of our life at this place been known to the world, we should have been regarded as madmen. . . . Our seclusion was perfect. . . . Indeed, the locality of our retirement had been kept a secret from my own former associates; and it had been many years since Dupin had ceased to know or be known in Paris. We existed within ourselves alone.

"It was a freak of fancy in my friend . . . to be enamored of the Night for her own sake; and into this *bizarrerie* . . . I quietly fell. . . . The sable divinity would not herself dwell with us always; but we could counterfeit her presence. At the first dawn of the morning we closed all the massy shutters of our old building; lighted a couple of tapers which, strongly perfumed, threw out only the ghastliest and feeblest of rays. By the aid of these we then busied our souls in dreams—reading, writing, or conversing, until warned by the clock of the advent of the true Darkness. Then we sallied forth into the streets, arm in arm, continuing the topics of the day, or roaming far and wide until a late hour, seeking, amid the wild lights and shadows of the populous city, that infinity of mental excitement which quiet observation can afford."

In this manner, our curious pair of friends, whom some mysterious affinity seems to have drawn together, pass their days by the spectral light of perfumed tapers, in a setting whose somewhat overcharged and stifling atmosphere carries us back to Ligeia; and their nights in the crowded thoroughfares of the city, among its "wild lights and shadows", already familiar to us from *The Man of the Crowd*. Indeed, the two friends might almost seem to be engaged, in their own way, in the pursuit of the sinister old man himself.

"At such times", continues our narrator, "I could not help remarking and admiring . . . a peculiar analytic ability in Dupin. He seemed, too, to take an eager delight in its exercise. . . . He boasted to me, with a low chuckling laugh, that most men, in respect to himself, wore windows in their bosoms, and was wont to follow up such assertions by direct and very startling proofs of his intimate knowledge of my own. His manner at these moments was frigid and abstract; his eyes were vacant in expression;<sup>1</sup> while his voice, usually a rich tenor, rose into a treble which would have sounded petulantly but for the deliberateness and entire distinctness of the enunciation. Observing him in these moods, I often dwelt meditatively upon the old philosophy of the Bi-Part Soul, and amused myself with the fantasy of a double Dupin—the creative and the resolvent—" a fancy not devoid of foundation if applied to the author himself, whose own personality has been split here into the two initial personages of the tale—Dupin, the analyst, and his friend the narrator, the creative artist.

At this point the episode of Chantilly is introduced, as if to give the reader a foretaste of Dupin's powers.

"We were strolling one night down a long dirty street, in the vicinity of the Palais Royal. Being both, apparently, occupied with thought, neither of us had spoken a syllable for five minutes at least. All at once Dupin broke forth with these words:—

"'He's a very little fellow, that's true, and would do better for the *Théâtre des Variétés*.'

"'There can be no doubt of that,' I replied unwittingly, and not at first observing (so much had I been absorbed in reflection) the extraordinary manner in which the speaker had chimed in with

<sup>1</sup> The close relationship between Dupin and Sherlock Holmes is evidenced by more than one common trait. In *A Study in Scarlet*, where Holmes makes his first bow to the public, Conan Doyle says of him, "Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning till night. On these occasions I have noted such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have supposed him to be addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion".

Again, in Chapter VII of the same book, Holmes reflects on the *outré* character (the very word used by Poe) of the crime he is called upon to solve, considering it a distinguishing feature of the case which should help in its elucidation. Even Sherlock Holmes' famous pipe is first smoked by Dupin in *The Purloined Letter*.

my meditations. In an instant afterward I recollected myself, and my astonishment was profound.

"'Dupin,' said I gravely, 'this is beyond my comprehension. I do not hesitate to say that I am amazed, and can scarcely credit my senses. How could you possibly know I was thinking of—?' Here I paused, to ascertain beyond a doubt whether he really knew of whom I thought.

"'—of Chantilly,' said he, 'why do you pause? You were remarking to yourself that his diminutive figure unfitted him for tragedy.'

"This was precisely what had formed the object of my reflections. Chantilly was a *quondam* cobbler of the Rue St. Denis, who, becoming stage-mad, had attempted the rôle of Xerxes in Crébillon's tragedy so called, and been notoriously Pasquinaded for his pains.

"'Tell me, for Heaven's sake,' I exclaimed, 'the method—if method there is—by which you have been enabled to fathom my soul in this matter.'"

Dupin, "about whom there was not a particle of *charlatanerie*", then relates the steps by which he has arrived at his astonishing conclusion.

"'It was the fruiterer——'" he explains, who formed the point of departure for his friend's reflections and his own speculations as to their probable nature. At a sudden turning in the street the fruiterer had jostled Dupin's companion, causing him to stumble over a pile of loose paving-stones which stood in the way; the loose paving-stones had led to thoughts of "stereotomy", a name applied to an improved type of pavement in which the stones were carefully overlapped and riveted. "Stereotomy", by its sound, naturally suggested "atomies", and hence the theories of Epicurus. From this point it was but a step to the "modern nebular cosmogony" which accords at many points with the doctrines of the Greek philosopher. The stars brought thoughts of Orion, just then shining brightly overhead, and, by way of a Latin verse applicable to Orion (formerly written Urion): *Perdidit antiquum litera prima sonum*, led finally to Chantilly, the cobbler turned actor, who had changed his name upon changing his profession—thus earning for himself the sarcastic jibes of the critic of the *Musée* in an article of the previous evening in which the verse in question had been quoted. Observation of his friend's outward behavior had confirmed Dupin in his deductions as to his train of thought. The



inevitable association between Orion and Chantilly was indicated by the "character of the smile" which passed over his lips. "You thought," says Dupin, "of the poor cobbler's immolation. So far, you had been stooping in your gait; but now I saw you draw yourself up to your full height. I was then sure that you reflected upon the diminutive figure of Chantilly. At this point I interrupted your meditations to remark that as, in fact, he *was* a very little fellow—that Chantilly—he would do better at the *Théâtre des Variétés*."

This cobbler who covers himself with ridicule by essaying the rôle of Xerxes—another name for Ahasuerus—might almost be our friend Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, ex-cobbler of Jerusalem, cropping up again in bizarre and unexpected fashion. But the little cobbler's new profession also arrests our attention. He goes "stage-mad" and becomes an actor—a tragedian, in fact—like David Poe, our author's father. David Poe left his home and profession (the study of law, not the cobbler's bench!) to cast in his lot with the Virginia Players. In Chantilly's luckless debut as a tragedian (reminiscent, incidentally, of Mr. Loss of Breath's declamatory rantings) we undoubtedly have a veiled reference to David Poe's lack of talent for the stage and to his unflattering reception by the public.

Like the Wandering Jew, Chantilly, the cobbler, is a father stripped of his prestige. He is an impotent father. Like Mr. Loss of Breath he is short-winded and short of stature. He is not even ironically endowed with corpulence, like Mr. Loss of Breath, but is in all respects "a very little fellow". When thinking of him, the narrator draws himself up to his full height; the son, in other words, is conscious of his superiority over his father. Nor can it be denied that Edgar Poe was an artist of very different calibre from David!

After having thus "immolated", or rather *eliminated* his "first" father by labeling the unsuccessful tragedian as both ridiculous and impotent, Poe passes on to the central problem of his tale, the actual deed of blood and the question of its authorship.

"Not long after this, we were looking over an evening edition of the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, when the following paragraphs arrested our attention.

"EXTRAORDINARY MURDERS.—This morning, about three o'clock, the inhabitants of the Quartier St. Roch were aroused from sleep

by a succession of terrific shrieks, issuing, apparently, from the fourth story of a house in the Rue Morgue, known to be in the sole occupancy of one Madame L'Espanaye, and her daughter, Mademoiselle Camille L'Espanaye. After some delay, occasioned by a fruitless attempt to procure admission in the usual manner, the gateway was broken in with a crowbar, and eight or ten of the neighbors entered, accompanied by two *gendarmes*. By this time the cries had ceased; but, as the party rushed up the first flight of stairs, two or more rough voices, in angry contention, were distinguished, and seemed to proceed from the upper part of the house. As the second landing was reached, these sounds, also, had ceased, and everything remained perfectly quiet. The party spread themselves, and hurried from room to room. Upon arriving at a large back chamber in the fourth story, (the door of which, being found locked, with the key inside, was forced open,) a spectacle presented itself which struck everyone present not less with horror than with astonishment.

“The apartment was in the wildest disorder—the furniture broken and thrown about in all directions. There was only one bedstead; and from this the bed had been removed, and thrown into the middle of the floor. On a chair lay a razor, besmeared with blood. On the hearth were two or three long and thick tresses of human hair, also dabbled in blood, and seeming to have been pulled out by the roots. Upon the floor were found four Napoleons, an ear-ring of topaz, three large silver spoons, three smaller of *métal d'Alger*, and two bags, containing nearly four thousand francs in gold. The drawers of a *bureau*, which stood in one corner, were open, and had been, apparently, rifled, although many articles still remained in them. A small iron safe was discovered under the *bed* (not under the bedstead). It was open, with the key still in the door. It had no contents beyond a few old letters, and other papers of little consequence.

“Of Madame L'Espanaye no traces were here seen; but an unusual quantity of soot being observed in the fireplace, a search was made in the chimney, and (horrible to relate!) the corpse of the daughter, head downward, was dragged therefrom; it having been thus forced up the narrow aperture for a considerable distance. The body was quite warm. Upon examining it, many excoriations were perceived, no doubt occasioned by the violence with which it had been thrust up and disengaged. Upon the face were many severe scratches, and, upon the throat, dark bruises, and

deep indentations of finger nails, as if the deceased had been throttled to death.

“After a thorough investigation of every portion of the house, without further discovery, the party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut, that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated—the former so much as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.

“To this horrible mystery there is not as yet, we believe, the slightest clew.”

The next number of the paper published further testimony.

Pauline Dubourg, a laundress who had been employed by the deceased, declared in the course of her evidence that she had never met any persons in the house when calling for the clothes or taking them home, and that she was sure the two women kept no servant.

Pierre Moreau, tobacconist, stated that he had been in the habit of selling Madame L'Espanaye small quantities of tobacco and snuff. “The two lived an exceedingly retired life—were reputed to have money.” Many other neighbors testified to the same effect.

Isidore Muset, *gendarme*, deposed “that he was called to the house about three o'clock in the morning, and found some twenty or thirty persons at the gateway, endeavoring to gain admittance. Forced it open, at length, with a bayonet—not with a crowbar. . . .” Isidore Muset substantiated the story that screams had been heard, followed by the sound of “two voices in loud and angry contention—the one a gruff voice, the other much shriller—a very strange voice. Could distinguish some words of the former, which was that of a Frenchman. Was positive that it was not a woman's voice. Could distinguish the words *sacré* and *diable*.” (Others claimed to have heard the exclamation *mon Dieu!* as well.) On the other hand, “the shrill voice was that of a foreigner. Could not be sure whether it was the voice of a man or of a woman. Could not make out what was said, but believed the language to be Spanish.”

“Henri Duval, a neighbor, and by trade a silversmith, deposes that he was one of the party who first entered the house. Corroborates the testimony of Muset in general,” with the exception that, in his opinion, “the shrill voice was that of an Italian. . . . Could not be sure that it was a man's voice. It might have been a woman's. Was not acquainted with the Italian language.”



Odenheimer, *restaurateur*, a Dutchman speaking no French, "was examined through an interpreter. . . . Corroborated the previous testimony in every respect but one. Was sure that the shrill voice was that of a man—of a Frenchman. . . ."

The next testimony quoted was that of Jules Mignaud, a banker, who stated that Mme. L'Espanaye kept an account at his bank, and that three days before the murder, she had withdrawn in person the sum of 4,000 francs. "This sum was paid in gold, and a clerk sent home with the money."

The clerk, Adolphe Le Bon, was next questioned, and declared that "on the day in question, about noon, he accompanied Madame L'Espanaye to her residence with the 4,000 francs, put up in two bags. Upon the door being opened, Mademoiselle L. appeared and took from his hands one of the bags, while the old lady relieved him of the other. He then bowed and departed. Did not see any person in the street at the time. It is a bye-street, very lonely."

Suffice it to add that William Bird, English tailor, further declared the shrill voice to have cried out in German, a language which he did not know; that Alfonso Garcia, undertaker, was convinced that the voice spoke English, of which he was equally ignorant; and finally that Alberto Montani, Italian confectioner, believed the voice to have been that of a Russian, "although he had never conversed with a native of Russia". Montani also added that the gruff voice, that of a Frenchman, appeared to be "expostulating".

Further examination of the witnesses established conclusively that they had found "the windows, both of the back and front room, . . . down and firmly fastened from within. The door between the two rooms was closed, but not locked. The door leading from the front room into the passage was locked, with the key on the inside", just as the door leading into the back room from the stairway had been. Thus it was clear that the murderer could not have escaped by means of the stairway. "There was not an inch of any portion of the house that was not carefully searched. Sweeps were sent up and down the chimneys. The house was a four story one, with garrets (*mansardes*). A trap-door on the roof was nailed down very securely—did not appear to have been opened for years."

Several witnesses were recalled, and stated that the chimneys of all the rooms on the fourth story were too narrow to admit the

passage of a human being. By "sweeps" had been meant "'cylindrical sweeping-brushes, such as are employed by those who clean chimneys. These brushes were passed up and down every flue in the house. There is no back passage by which any one could have descended while the party proceeded up stairs. The body of Mademoiselle L'Espanaye was so firmly wedged in the chimney that it could not be got down until four or five of the party united their strength.'"

Then followed the testimony of Paul Dumas, physician, and Alexandre Etienne, surgeon, who had been summoned at daybreak to examine the bodies. "'They were both then lying on the sack-  
ing of the bedstead in the chamber where Mademoiselle L. was found. The corpse of the young lady was greatly bruised and excoriated. . . . There were several deep scratches just below the chin, together with a series of livid spots which were evidently the impression of fingers. The face was fearfully discolored and the eyeballs protruded. The tongue had been partially bitten through. . . . The corpse of the mother was horribly mutilated. All the bones of the right leg and arm were more or less shattered. The left *tibia* much splintered, as well as all the ribs of the left side. Whole body dreadfully bruised and discolored. It was not possible to say how the injuries had been inflicted. . . . The head of the deceased, when seen by witness, was entirely separated from the body, and was also greatly shattered. The throat had evidently been cut with some very sharp instrument—probably with a razor.'"

With these words, the newspaper concluded its report, adding the following comment: "'A murder so mysterious, and so perplexing in all its particulars, was never before committed in Paris—

<sup>1</sup> R. Piédelièvre and R. Chonez, in an article in *Paris-Médical*, Nov. 21, 1931 (*Edgar Poe, médecin légiste*) have called attention to the errors of legal medicine committed by Poe in this description. If the head of the older woman had been so nearly severed as to "fall off" when an attempt was made to raise her body, it would surely have been detached by the shock of her fall from the window. Furthermore, the fall in itself would not have sufficed to produce the "horrible mutilations" and the "dreadfully bruised and discolored" condition of which mention is made. Certain of Dupin's deductions, by which he concludes from the appearance of the corpse that it must have been thrown from the window, are thus to a certain extent invalidated. But, as the authors themselves observe, these errors are of little importance, since, in a work of art, it is the imaginative spell exerted upon the reader which counts.

if indeed a murder had been committed at all. The police are entirely at fault.' ”

The evening papers added no news of importance beyond the announcement that Adolphe Le Bon, the bank employé, had been arrested and imprisoned.

Dupin, although seemingly “singularly interested in the progress of the affair”, has as yet made no comment. Now, however, on learning of Le Bon’s arrest, he breaks silence at last, and asks his friend what opinion he has formed of the case. The friend replies that he, like all Paris, considers it insoluble. Dupin, however, remarks that truth is not always at the bottom of a well, adding, “As for these murders, let us enter into some examinations for ourselves, before we make up an opinion concerning them. An inquiry will afford us amusement . . . and besides, Le Bon once rendered me a service for which I am not ungrateful. We will go and see the premises. . . . I know G—, the Prefect of Police, and shall have no difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission.”

Permission is obtained, and the two friends set out for the Rue Morgue. “This is one of those miserable thoroughfares which intervene between the Rue Richelieu and the Rue St. Roch.”<sup>1</sup> They arrive late in the afternoon, discover the house, and make a tour of inspection of the sides and rear of the premises, “Dupin, in the meanwhile, examining the whole neighborhood, as well as the house, with . . . minuteness of attention. . . .” They now enter the house, admitted by the agents in charge after having shown their credentials, and go up to the room where the two corpses are still lying. “The disorders of the room had . . . been suffered to exist. I saw nothing”, confesses the narrator, “beyond what had been stated in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*”. However, “Dupin scrutinized everything—not excepting the bodies of the victims”, the other rooms of the house, and the yard. “The examination occupied us till dark, when we took our departure. On our way home my companion stopped in for a moment at the office of one of the daily papers.” Then the two friends return home.

Dupin preserves complete silence upon the subject of the murders till the next morning. “He then asked me, suddenly, if I had observed anything *peculiar* at the scene of the atrocity.” But the narrator has observed nothing not already reported in the papers.

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to remind the reader that Poe had never been in Paris.



"‘The *Gazette*,’ replied Dupin, ‘has not entered, I fear, into the unusual horror of the thing. . . . It appears to me that this mystery is considered insoluble, for the very reason which should cause it to be regarded as easy of solution—I mean the *outré* character of its features. The police are confounded by the seeming absence of motive—not for the murder itself—but for the atrocity of the murder. They are puzzled, too, by the seeming impossibility of reconciling the voices heard in contention, with the facts that no one was discovered upstairs but the assassinated Mademoiselle L’Espanaye, and that there were no means of egress without the notice of the party ascending.’” Dupin concludes his comments with these words: “‘In fact, the facility with which I shall arrive, or have arrived, at the solution of this mystery, is in the direct ratio of its apparent insolubility in the eyes of the police.’”

To the growing amazement of his friend, Dupin adds, looking toward the door of the apartment, “‘I am now awaiting a person who, although perhaps not the perpetrator of these butcheries, must have been in some measure implicated in their perpetration. Of the worst portion of the crimes committed, it is probable that he is innocent. . . . I look for the man here—in this room—every moment. . . . Should he come, it will be necessary to detain him. Here are pistols. . . .’”

“Dupin went on, very much as if in a soliloquy. I have already spoken of his abstract manner at such times. His discourse was addressed to myself; but his voice, although by no means loud, had that intonation which is commonly employed when speaking to someone at a great distance. His eyes, vacant in expression, regarded only the wall.”

After having, for form’s sake, considered and rapidly eliminated the untenable hypothesis of the old woman’s having first killed her daughter and then herself, Dupin goes on to ask his friend if he has noticed nothing peculiar about the depositions of the witnesses. The narrator has of course observed that all were in agreement as to the gruff voice, which they attributed to a Frenchman, but that each had a different theory in regard to the high, shrill voice. Dupin, however, calls attention to the fact that each witness, in describing the higher voice, “spoke of it as that of a *foreigner*.” Furthermore, each witness believed the voice to have been speaking in a language with which he was not familiar. “No words—no sounds resembling words—were by any witness mentioned as dis-

tinguishable." These peculiarities in the testimony of the witnesses suggested to Dupin a suspicion which he does not as yet make known to us, but which served to guide him in his investigations at the scene of the crime.

"Let us now transport ourselves in fancy to this chamber," says Dupin. "What shall we first seek here? The means of egress employed by the murderers. . . . Let us examine, each by each, the possible means of egress." After repeating the examination of all the floors, ceilings, and walls, already made by the police, Dupin is satisfied in his turn that no secret issues exist. As has already been stated, "both doors leading from the rooms into the passage were securely locked, with the keys inside." The chimneys, "though of ordinary width for some eight or ten feet above the hearths, will not admit, throughout their extent, the body of a large cat." No possibility remains except the windows. "Through those of the front room, no one could have escaped without notice from the crowd in the street. The murderers *must* have passed, then, through those of the back room. . . .

"There are two windows in the chamber," continues Dupin. "One of them is unobstructed by furniture and is wholly visible. The lower portion of the other is hidden from view by the head of the unwieldy bedstead. . . . The former was found securely fastened from within. It resisted the utmost force of those who endeavored to raise it. A large gimlet-hole had been pierced in its frame to the left, and a very stout nail was found fitted therein, nearly to the head. Upon examining the other window, a similar nail was seen similarly fitted in it; and a vigorous attempt to raise this sash failed also. The police were now entirely satisfied that egress had not been in these directions. And *therefore*, it was thought a matter of supererogation to withdraw the nails and open the windows."

Dupin, however, is more subtle in his reasoning. "Here it was, I knew," he says, "that all apparent impossibilities *must* be proved not to be such in reality." He knows that the murderers must have escaped by one of the windows. But how may this conviction be reconciled with the fact that the sashes of both windows were found closed? Dupin concludes that the sashes *must* have the power of fastening automatically. "I stepped to the unobstructed casement," he says, "withdrew the nail . . . and attempted to raise the sash. It resisted all my efforts, as I expected. A concealed

spring must, I now knew, exist. . . . A careful search soon brought to light the hidden spring. . . . I now replaced the nail and regarded it attentively. A person passing out through this window might have reclosed it, and the spring would have caught—but the nail could not have been replaced. . . . The assassins *must* have escaped through the other window. Supposing then, the springs upon each sash to be the same . . . there *must* be found a difference between the nails. . . . Getting up upon the sacking of the bedstead, I looked over the head-board minutely at the second casement. . . .” There again Dupin finds a spring and a nail. This nail, he tells us, “had, in every respect, the appearance of its fellow in the other window; but this fact was an absolute nullity (conclusive as it might be to some) when compared with the consideration that here, at this point, terminated the clew. ‘There *must* be something wrong’, I said, ‘about the nail’. I touched it; and the head, with about a quarter of an inch of the shank, came off in my fingers. The rest of the shank was in the gimlet-hole, where it had been broken off.” Dupin replaces the head of the nail, presses the spring, and raises the sash for a few inches; “the head went up with it, remaining firm in its bed”. When the sash is again closed, “the semblance of a whole nail” is once more perfect.

One portion of the mystery has thus been solved. “The assassin had escaped through the window which looked upon the bed”, the window had closed behind him, and the police had attributed the resistance of the sash to the action of the nail.

“The next question is that of the mode of descent”, says Dupin, continuing to hold his listener spellbound with the revelation of his amazing powers of induction. It appears that a lightning rod runs along the outer wall at a distance of some five and a half feet from the window in question. From this rod it would have been impossible to reach the window itself. But the shutters, the upper portion of which is “latticed, or worked in open trellis”, are at least three and a half feet in width. It would thus be perfectly possible for anyone of “unusual activity and courage”, after having climbed the lightning rod to a point opposite the open shutters, which would then be only two and a half feet away, to seize one of them (the lattice work would give him an excellent hold), and, “placing his feet securely against the wall, and springing boldly from it”,



to swing himself in through the window, supposing it to be open at the time, and to pull the blind shut behind him.

Dupin insists once more on the "*very extraordinary*" degree of agility necessary for the accomplishment of this feat, and asks his friend to consider the point in connection with "that *very peculiar* shrill (or harsh) and *unequal* voice, about whose nationality no two persons could be found to agree, and in whose utterance no syllabification could be detected".

"At these words," says the narrator, "a vague and half-formed conception of the meaning of Dupin flitted over my mind. I seemed to be upon the verge of comprehension, without power to comprehend—as men, at times, find themselves upon the brink of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember."

But Dupin continues his discourse: "You will see that I have shifted the question from the mode of egress to that of ingress. It was my design to suggest that both were effected in the same manner and at the same point. Let us now revert to the interior of the room." He goes on to point out that articles from the bureau drawers were left lying in disorder, and, most important of all, that the sum of four thousand francs in gold had not been removed from the room. Theft, then, was obviously not the motive of the crime.

Dupin now passes in review the more atrocious details of the crime itself, insisting on the strength which would have been needed to thrust the body of the younger woman into the chimney, to tear out locks of the old woman's hair with such force that fragments of the scalp still clung to the roots, and to all but sever her head with a razor. "Combine the ideas of an agility astounding," says Dupin, "a strength superhuman, a ferocity brutal, a butchery without motive, a *grotesquerie* in horror absolutely alien from humanity, and a voice . . . devoid of all distinct or intelligible syllabification. What result, then, has ensued? What impression have I made upon your fancy?"

The friend suggests that an escaped lunatic might answer the requirements but Dupin objects that even the utterances of madmen have the coherence of syllabification. "Besides," he adds, "the hair of a madman is not such as I now hold in my hand. I disentangled this little tuft from the rigidly clenched fingers of Madame L'Espanaye."

Our opinion of the abilities of the police, already none too high,

is further lowered upon learning that they have not only failed to open the window by which the criminal escaped, but have even neglected to examine the clenched hands of the victim! Where should we be without Dupin? That remarkable man now produces a sheet of paper on which he has traced the "*dark bruises, and deep indentations of finger nails*" found upon the throat of Mademoiselle L'Espanaye. By asking his friend to place his outstretched hand upon the imprint, Dupin shows that its proportions are far greater than those of any human hand.

Dupin now lays an open book before his friend's horrified eyes. It is "a minute anatomical and generally descriptive account of the large fulvous Ourang-Outang of the East Indian islands". In a flash, the narrator "comprehends the full horrors of the murder". But, he asks, what of the second voice, which was heard to expostulate in French, using the expressions *mon Dieu, diable, and sacré*? Dupin explains that he believes a Frenchman to have had cognizance of the murder, although he is in all probability "innocent of all participation in the bloody transactions which took place. The Ourang-Outang may have escaped from him". The animal is undoubtedly still at large. On the previous evening, therefore, Dupin had caused the following announcement to be inserted in *Le Monde* "a paper devoted to the shipping interest, and much sought by sailors":

"CAUGHT—In the Bois de Boulogne, early in the morning of the — inst., (*the morning of the murder*) a very large, tawny Ourang-Outang of the Bornese species. The owner, (who is ascertained to be a sailor, belonging to a Maltese vessel,) may have the animal again, upon identifying it satisfactorily, and paying a few charges arising from its capture and keeping. Call at No. —, Rue —, Faubourg St. Germain—au troisième."

Dupin has deduced the calling and the nationality of the animal's owner from a knot of greasy ribbon which he found on the ground at the foot of the lightning rod. This knot could have been tied only by a sailor, and its use is peculiar to the Maltese, serving to bind the hair "into one of those long *queues* of which sailors are so fond". If some error has crept into his deductions, reasons Dupin, no harm will have been done, while if they are correct, "a great point is gained". The sailor will surely come in answer to the advertisement. He will reason somewhat as follows: "I am innocent; I am poor; my Ourang-Outang is of great

value . . . why should I lose it through idle apprehensions of danger? . . . The police are at fault. . . . Above all, *I am known*. . . . Should I avoid claiming a property of so great value, which it is known that I possess, I will render the animal, at least, liable to suspicion."

At this moment a step is heard upon the stairs. "The front door of the house had been left open, and the visitor had entered, without ringing, and advanced several steps upon the staircase. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate. Presently we heard him descending." But the visitor changes his mind once more, mounts the stairs again, and knocks on the door. "Come in!" says Dupin, in a cheerful and hearty voice.

"A man entered. He was a sailor, evidently,—a tall, stout, and muscular-looking person, with a certain daredevil expression of countenance, not altogether unprepossessing. His face, greatly sunburnt, was more than half hidden by whisker and *mustachio*. He had with him a huge oaken cudgel, but appeared to be otherwise unarmed. He bowed awkwardly, and bade us 'good evening', in French accents, which, although somewhat Neufchâtelish, were still sufficiently indicative of a Parisian origin.

"'Sit down, my friend,' said Dupin. 'I suppose you have come about the Ourang-Outang. Upon my word, I almost envy you your possession of him; a remarkably fine, and no doubt a very valuable animal. How old do you suppose him to be?'

"The sailor drew a long breath, with the air of a man relieved of some intolerable burden, and then replied, in an assured tone:

"'I have no way of telling—but he can't be more than four or five years old. Have you got him here?'"

Dupin replies that the animal is housed in a neighboring livery stable, where his owner may claim him the following morning, and declares that he almost regrets having to part with the creature—whereupon the sailor replies that he will willingly pay a reward.

"'Well', replies Dupin, '. . . Let me think!—what should I have? Oh! I will tell you. My reward shall be this. You shall give me all the information in your power about these murders in the Rue Morgue.'" Dupin calmly walks to the door, turns the key in the lock, and draws his pistol.

The sailor flushes purple, and seems to be struggling for breath. After attempting to rise, cudgel in hand, he falls back in his chair, trembling and speechless.



"‘My friend,’" says Dupin, in a kind tone, "‘you are alarming yourself unnecessarily. . . . We mean you no harm whatever. . . . I perfectly well know that you are innocent of the atrocities in the Rue Morgue. . . . You have done nothing which you could have avoided. . . . You have no reason for concealment. . . . On the other hand, you are bound by every principle of honor to confess all you know. An innocent man is now imprisoned, charged with that crime of which you can point out the perpetrator.’"

Thus reassured, the sailor speaks. He and one of his companions had together captured the "Ourang-Outang" in Borneo. This companion dying, the animal had fallen into his exclusive possession. On the homeward voyage, the creature had given great trouble through its "intractable ferocity". In Paris, he had kept it carefully confined, treating a wound in its foot made by a splinter on board ship. The sailor's ultimate design was to sell the animal. But, "returning home from some sailors' frolic on the night, or rather in the morning of the murder, he found the beast occupying his own bedroom, into which it had broken from a closet adjoining, where it had been, as was thought, securely confined. Razor in hand, and fully lathered, it was sitting before the looking-glass, attempting the operation of shaving, in which it had previously no doubt watched its master through the key-hole of the closet." The man seized his whip, but the ape sprang out of the room, rushed down the stairs, and, through an open window, gained the street.

"The Frenchman followed in despair; . . . the chase continued for a long time. The streets were profoundly quiet, as it was nearly three o'clock in the morning. In passing down an alley in the rear of the Rue Morgue, the fugitive's attention was arrested by a light gleaming from the open window of Madame L'Espanaye's chamber, in the fourth story of her house. Rushing to the building it perceived the lightning rod, clambered up . . . grasped the shutter, which was thrown fully back against the wall, and, by its means, swung itself directly upon the headboard of the bed."

The sailor, accustomed as he was to climbing in the rigging of ships, soon followed the beast, but when he had reached the level of the window, which lay far to the left, "the most that he could accomplish was to reach over so as to obtain a glimpse of the interior of the room. . . . Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter, habited in their night clothes, had apparently been arranging some

papers in the iron chest already mentioned, which had been wheeled into the middle of the room. It was open, and its contents lay beside it on the floor. The victims must have been sitting with their backs to the window. . . .

"As the sailor looked in, the gigantic animal had seized Madame L'Espanaye by the hair, (which was loose, as she had been combing it) and was flourishing the razor about her face, in imitation of the gestures of a barber. The daughter lay prostrate and motionless; she had swooned. The screams and struggles of the old lady (during which the hair was torn from her head) had the effect of changing the probably pacific purposes of the Ourang-Outang into those of wrath. With one determined swoop of its muscular arm it nearly severed her head from her body. The sight of blood inflamed its anger into frenzy. . . . It flew upon the body of the girl, and imbedded its fearful talons in her throat, retaining its grasp until she expired." Just at this moment the beast caught sight of its master; its frenzy was instantly converted into fear. It was at this point that the devastation of the room took place; seized with a consciousness of guilt, the ape leaped in agitation about the room, overturning and breaking furniture, and dragging the bed from the bedstead. "In conclusion, it seized first the corpse of the daughter, and thrust it up the chimney . . . then that of the old lady, which it immediately hurled through the window headlong."

During all this time, the sailor had given utterance to "exclamations of horror and affright". These, mingled with the "fiendish jibberings of the brute", were the two voices heard by the party on the staircase. As the ourang-outang approached the window with its "mutilated burden", the horrified onlooker slid precipitately down the lightning rod, and hurried home. The animal must have escaped by the same route, the window closing of itself behind him. "It was subsequently caught by the owner himself," adds the narrator, "who obtained for it a very large sum at the Jardin des Plantes". Dupin lays the results of his investigation before the Prefect of Police, and the innocent Le Bon is set at liberty.

The Prefect, however, manifests some ill humor and indulges in a sarcasm or two "about the propriety of every person minding his own business". And our detective story ends with a few derogatory reflections on the part of Dupin with respect to this official, whom he declares himself happy to have defeated "in his own castle".

Carried away by the suspense of the narrative, we have not paused to interpolate our comments as we went along.

As we have already seen, with *The Man of the Crowd* the mysteriously tragic figure of the *criminal* appears for the first time in Poe's work, the crime itself remaining buried in obscurity. With *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, however, the crime is brought into the foreground, and is set before us from the outset in all its blood and horror. It is the riddle of the identity of the criminal which Dupin, to whom we are here introduced for the first time, is called upon to solve.

But we must not be too ready to accept at its face value the account of the crime given us in the text. The deeper meaning for the unconscious of the bloody mutilations inflicted upon Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter can no more be understood at first sight than the identity of the Man of the Crowd's sinister features could be determined by the light of the street-lamps alone. Improbable as they are, the events chronicled by Poe in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* are not beyond the limits of physical possibility. It is conceivable that a huge anthropoid ape, escaped from captivity, might climb through an open window into a room occupied by two defenseless women, strangle one, cut the throat of the other, and then make his escape. In such a case, in the absence of witnesses, the police would assuredly find themselves nonplussed. But determinism is no less rigorous in the psychic than in the physical realm, though its workings there are more subtle and difficult to trace. The mere fact of physical possibility alone does not explain why Poe should have chosen this particular theme for the first of his tales of the detection of crime, that in which the wizard, Dupin, makes his bow to the public. Nor, above all, can mere plausibility account for the unusual fascination which this tale has exerted, almost without exception, on the countless readers who for nearly a century have shuddered over Poe's hideous and bizarre invention of the ape-murderer of the Rue Morgue.

For the fact is that the theme of murder—in itself, it should not be forgotten, an appeal to the instincts of aggression which slumber within us but which are so repressed by our civilization that we cannot allow them free play except in fiction or in the chase—is at the same time an expression of another theme, equally eternal, and of even greater interest to the human unconscious. Analyses



of neurotics as well as of so-called normal individuals has taught us, among other things, that in the childhood of almost every human being a *primal scene* has occurred, traces of which persist in the unconscious throughout his whole later life. This scene is none other than the act of sexual intercourse performed by the child's parents, or by those who may have taken the parents' place in relation to the child. Adults are apt to pay too little attention to the presence of very small children on such occasions, wrongly supposing that they are too young to observe or understand what is taking place. In many households, lack of space necessitates the child's sharing a room with its parents, who cannot be expected to renounce all conjugal life on that account. When the call of instinct comes, it is easy enough for the parents to persuade themselves that the child is asleep. But the child's instincts do not sleep. Incredible as it may seem to the adult, children begin to store up sexual observations when no more than a year or a year and a half old. True, at the time these impressions are received, the child's ego, as we have elsewhere remarked, has not developed to the point of being able to comprehend them intellectually. But it is none the less certain that significant memory traces are deposited even at this age in the unconscious, where their presence is revealed by dreams and fantasies during the course of analysis.

It is difficult for us, with our adult processes of thought, to form any conception of the workings of instinct, intelligence, and observation in the child of one and a half years. Certain it is that children of that age are already capable of notable achievements such as learning to talk. Connecting a given sound with the representation of an object, for instance, is a feat which no animal, however intelligent, has ever succeeded in imitating.

The child's observations of parental coitus, carried out with the aid of his sense of sight when daylight or the dim glow of the night lamp permits, or of his sense of hearing when the room is darkened, constitute without doubt one of the chief means of instruction provided by nature for the human infant. For this tiny being belongs to a species more highly endowed with sensuality than any other—a species in which the erotic life knows no limitations of time and season. Thus, throughout the year, and from his earliest infancy, the child has ample opportunity to observe the acts and gestures expressive of physical love; as a result, his own instincts—already preformed in the highly sexual little

animal that he is—early begin to receive stimuli from without as well as from within. Something within him responds with all the force of his instinctive young being to these external stimuli, which, in their turn, act upon and strengthen his deep, preformed instincts.

For the fact remains, as all analyses tend to show, that sexual matters possess the greatest inherent interest for the child from a very early stage in his development, being rivaled in that respect only by the activities connected with nourishment and excretion, functions in themselves highly tinged for him with erotism. Nothing else in the external world is as interesting to him as the manifestations of adult sexuality which he may have occasion to observe. All this might be very well were the child destined to grow up in a savage society. But among civilized peoples, education soon intervenes to check, or even completely to repress all sexuality in the child. The first initiation provided him by nature through observation of the amorous behavior of his elders, is replaced by the training of a wholly opposite tendency given him by these same elders—a training which tends to condemn sexuality and all interest in sexual things, when it does not, as in Poe's case, result in complete and permanent sexual impotence. But nature's influence cannot be entirely obliterated; memories of the scenes which the child has witnessed remain with him, to be carried over into adult life. Observation of intercourse between his parents—or between those who may stand to him in the relation of parents at the time—constitutes a permanent part of the inheritance of every human being. So true is this, in fact, that when such scenes are lacking in reality, they are often replaced by a fantasy of atavistic or phylogenetic origin. The sight of two dogs mating, for instance, may suffice to call such a fantasy into being.

In Poe's case, there is every reason to believe that the "primal scene" took place in reality. Aside from the convincing evidence to that effect which we find in Poe's work, we know that his parents' circumstances were not such as to permit of their providing a separate room for the child during the course of the migrations to which their profession condemned them. There can be no doubt that the little boy had every opportunity to spy upon his parents' most intimate gestures through the dim light of their common bedroom. As the reader will already have guessed, the murder of Mme L'Espanaye by a ferocious ape is the equivalent, for the unconscious, imbued with sexuality, of a representation of the

sexual act. Not without reason did it seem to almost all the witnesses present that the voices which they had heard as they ascended the stairs were those of a man and woman, a human couple. Furthermore, the severed head of the old woman is a castration symbol, a reference to the theme of female castration which forms the subject of one of the fantasies most frequently met with in male children. A similar significance may be attached to the locks of hair torn out by their roots, as well to the other mutilations suffered by the older woman.

At this point it may be well for us to recall one general aspect of these infantile observations of coitus: namely, that the child invariably interprets what he has seen or heard as an act of violence and cruelty of which the woman is the victim. This conception, called by Freud the *sadistic conception of coitus*, is found in analysis to be present in the unconscious of every individual. It is appropriate to the pregenital stages in the organization of the libido during which observations of this kind are generally made, and is the only interpretation possible to the child, in his ignorance of the existence of either sperm or vagina, of an act which does in fact appear to be aggressive in character, and which he instinctively likens to the taps and blows and small hurts which he himself has received. And in spite of its limitations, this conception is not without an element of truth. Penetration of the vagina is not always pleasant for the woman; for the virgin it is actually painful. It has in common with a murderous assault precisely that element of penetration from without which is necessary if the weapon of aggression, whatever its nature, is to accomplish its purpose. There are, in fact, only three possible reasons for penetrating the body from without: food and drink may be introduced to nourish the body; poison, steel, or some other weapon, to destroy it; or the erect penis, to fecundate it. It is not surprising that these three forms of penetration should become fused and confounded with one another in the unconscious. In the fantasies of neurotic individuals, a desire to be fecundated may frequently appear as a fear of being poisoned, while penetration by a pointed instrument may serve, aside from its obvious meaning, as a symbol for penetration by the phallus.

But this is not all: the child at first supposes this sexual penetration which he has witnessed to have taken place through the anus, the only abdominal cavity of whose existence he is aware.



This is true of children of both sexes. The little boy even starts by attributing a penis to all beings, including his mother. It is only later, when he has discovered and more or less accepted the fact of differences in sex, that he postulates castration of the woman as a necessary condition of intercourse. As a corollary to this belief, we often find the idea that the woman has been castrated by the man in the act of intercourse itself.

Not content, then, with penetrating the body of Mme L'Espanaye with the phallic razor, the orang-outang in Poe's tale scalps her and cuts off her head. Here, again, we know that the widespread custom of preserving the human head as a trophy, is a classic instance of the substitution in the unconscious of the head for the severed phallus.<sup>1</sup>

Our hypothesis is confirmed by another tale of Poe's, written not long after *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and influenced by the same psychic trends. We refer to *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, subtitled by Poe, *A Sequel to The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.<sup>2</sup> This weaker replica of Poe's first detective story is based on a crime actually committed in New York. It recounts the mysterious assassination of a young girl, employed as assistant in a perfumer's shop, in a secluded bit of woodland on the outskirts of Paris. Her corpse is found floating in the Seine; the Prefect of Police is of course nonplussed again, and it is Dupin who solves the mystery. The girl has been raped as well as murdered, and the criminal proves to be a young naval officer—a seaman again, dark-skinned like the owner of the orang-outang. The Maltese sailor was "greatly sunburned"; this new criminal is "of a dark and swarthy complexion". In this theme of the sailor who becomes involved either directly or by proxy in crime, may we not see a reflection, not only of the universal symbolic connection between the sea and the mother which we had occasion to study when analyzing Arthur Gordon Pym, but also of Henry Poe, the sailor, who, for a time, stood in his younger brother's eyes as so completely the prototype of all heroic and amorous adventure that his voyages—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. in particular, Marie Bonaparte: *Du Symbolisme des trophées de tête*. *Revue française de psychoanalyse*, 1927, fasc. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt, A Sequel to The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. (Snowden's *Lady's Companion*, November, December, 1842; February, 1843; 1845.)

or his own account of them— came to be incorporated in young Edgar's fictitious autobiography.

It will be recalled that when Edgar went to live with Mrs. Clemm in 1831, he found his brother Henry already installed there before him. Henry's disease had not yet reached its final stages, and for a time the two brothers shared the same room, wrote poetry together, were devoted companions—and even courted the same girl, Kate Blakely.<sup>1</sup>

But this fraternal intimacy was of short duration. Edgar came to live with Mrs. Clemm in March, and Henry died in August of the same year. In the following year, Edgar, who was then twenty-three years old, fell in love with Mary Devereaux. We know the story of their idyllic courtship, and its stormy close. Poe's love affair ended as similar adventures later in his life were to end, in an exhibition of drunkenness which alarmed the lady and caused her to dismiss him. Nevertheless, if Poe can ever be said to have felt anything resembling a real physical attraction for a woman, it was for Mary Devereaux. Hervey Allen comes to this conclusion after a study of Mary's journal,<sup>2</sup> while the fact that the only one of Poe's tales in which mention is made of an act of frankly sexual character, has as its heroine a girl by the name of Marie whose family name is of French origin, certainly does anything but contradict the assertion.

But to continue: we know from one of Poe's letters that *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* was written early in the summer of 1842.<sup>3</sup> In January of the same year, Virginia had her first hæmorrhage from the lungs—an experience of terrible import for Poe, reviving as it did his unconscious infantile memories of his consumptive mother, and of her similar attacks. Other hæmorrhages succeeded the first, constantly renewing the temptations of a sadistic nature which Poe's moral sense was repeatedly called upon to repress. The effect of all this was to undermine still further Poe's already none too stable psychic equilibrium. He began to take refuge in drink. "I became insane, with long intervals of terrible sanity,"

<sup>1</sup> Allen, Hervey: *Israfel* I, pp. 319-320.

<sup>2</sup> *Israfel* I, 336.

<sup>3</sup> Poe to Roberts, Philadelphia, June 4, 1842. "I have just completed a similar article, which I shall entitle *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*." (Virginia Edition, XVII, 112.)

he wrote later of this period. "During these fits of absolute unconsciousness, I drank—God only knows how often or how much."<sup>1</sup>

Thus alcohol evidently offered Poe one means of escape from the temptations to deeds of sadism aroused in him by Virginia's recurring hæmorrhages. But there was another possibility—the "fugue". As Hervey Allen tells us: "While Virginia was lying on what seemed her death-bed, probably at Coates Street in Philadelphia, Poe went on a spree and finally arrived in New York, where he looked up Mary's husband and obtained her address."<sup>2</sup> He took the ferry for Jersey City, where Mary lived, but having forgotten her address, made several trips back and forth on the ferry-boat, wandering about the decks like a madman, till he found someone who could direct him to her house. We have quoted Mary's own account of his more than strange behavior after he got there.

A few days later, Mrs. Clemm arrived in Jersey City after a hurried journey from Philadelphia. Assisted by Mary, she at last found her Eddy in a neary-by wood where he had apparently been wandering for several days without food or shelter. He was led back to Philadelphia by Mrs. Clemm.

The date of this "fugue" is variously given as late June, early July, or April, after Poe had returned to his desk at Graham's after one of his "short absences", to find Griswold installed there in his place. Mary herself tells us that Poe's visit occurred "in spring". In any case, we may be sure that during this whole period when Virginia's hæmorrhages were evoking so vividly the terrors of Poe's infantile past, both alcohol on the one hand, and thoughts of "fugue" and of a return to Mary on the other—("Come rest in this bosom", as the old song which he made her sing for him ran!)—were very much in evidence. Return to Mary spelled flight from the temptations of a sadistic and necrophilic character aroused in him by Virginia, but Mary's nearness brought with it in turn sexual temptations of a different kind which again forced him to take refuge in flight—this time in flight to the woods.

All these elements are combined in *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*. Poe undoubtedly wrote the tale in May, and, according to our belief, after rather than before his Jersey City "fugue". In all probability, this nightmare of the rape and assassination of a young

<sup>1</sup> *Israfel*, II, 521.

<sup>2</sup> *Israfel*, II, pp. 532-533.



girl in a thicket in the suburbs of Paris was first lived out in imagination while Poe was wandering half-mad in the Jersey woods, obsessed by thoughts of Virginia and Mary.

Mary had contributed her name to the heroine of the tale, while the murderer, the young naval officer, is animated by a sadistic passion similar to that which Poe might have felt for *his* Mary had he not been condemned to impotence. But most vividly of all is the figure of Marie Rogêt marked with a likeness to Virginia: "Marie . . . was the only daughter of the widow Estelle Rogêt. The father had died during the child's infancy, and from the period of his death, until within eighteen months of the assassination, . . . the mother and daughter had dwelt together in the Rue Pavée St. André; Madame there keeping a *pension*, assisted by Marie." Finally, Marie's corpse even bears traces of Virginia's hæmorrhages. When her body was taken from the Seine, "the face was suffused with dark blood, some of which issued from the mouth". It was not only in drink and in "fugue"-like escapades that Poe sought escape from life's real dramas, but also in the fictitious realm of his art, where their reflection is still visible to our eyes after the lapse of more than a century.

But there is one feature of The Mystery of Marie Rogêt which enables us to arrive at a still fuller understanding of its true significance. The fictitious drama of Marie Rogêt of Paris is paralleled, as Poe explicitly informs us, by another—a real drama, this time, which had actually taken place in America: the murder of Mary Rogers of New York. The circumstances of the two tragedies, says the creator of one of them, were strangely similar! But Poe had prefaced the tale with the following observation of Novalis: "There are ideal series of events which run parallel with the real ones. They rarely coincide. Men and circumstances generally modify the ideal train of events, so that it seems imperfect, and its consequences are equally imperfect. Thus with the Reformation; instead of Protestantism came Lutheranism."<sup>1</sup>

This may doubtless be taken to mean, in the present instance, that life had nothing better to offer Edgar Poe in place of the "violation" of his mother by his father which he had witnessed as a child, than the inferior substitute of a possible "violation" of his child wife Virginia. In all probability the first imprint made upon

<sup>1</sup> According to the Virginia Edition this quotation is taken from Novalis' *Moralische Ansichten*.

Poe by the great initial drama of his life, the heroine of which was his mother, was as superior in force and sharpness of outline to the blurred replica offered him later in life in the person of his little wife and cousin Virginia, as *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is superior to *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* in artistic merit. For whereas Poe was thirty-three years old when Virginia had her first hæmoptysis, he was only two when those from which his mother suffered,—supposed by the child to be in some way connected with the bleeding of a different and more sexual nature of which he had doubtless also obtained glimpses—made their indelible imprint upon the impressionable substance of his infantile psyche.

We are now better equipped to confront the problem of the true identity of the various actors in the drama of the Rue Morgue.

But first of all, what external influences could have determined a revival in Poe's unconscious of the theme of the murdered mother, even before Virginia's first attack of hæmoptysis had taken place? We are unable to answer this question with any degree of precision. We know only two of the many factors which may have helped to bring about the emergence of the "guilty father" from Poe's unconscious: the rupture with Burton, and the fact that, at about the same time, (or in any case, after he had made the acquaintance of Graham and of Graham's wine-cellar) Poe had begun to drink heavily again. And it is the property of alcohol to set free the aggressive components of the instincts.

But let us now proceed to identify if we can the various persons concerned in the mysterious drama which Dupin is called upon to unravel.

Had Dupin added a knowledge of psychoanalysis to his talents as a detective, he might have pointed out to Poe that, as David Poe's son, it was eminently fitting that his first chain of associations, that relating to Chantilly, should have ended with a bad actor! But not being an analyst, Dupin saw in Chantilly nothing more than Chantilly, and in the orang-outang merely an orang-outang.

Chantilly, the ex-cobbler, the unsuccessful tragedian who is hissed and jeered from the stage and finally immolated at the hands of a critic as merciless as Poe himself had ever been, is, as we have seen, David Poe, Edgar's rightful father, who had disappeared when his son was but a year and a half old. The narrator is Poe,

the artist; Dupin is Poe, the analyst, the methodical reasoner, who arrives at an understanding after the fact of the deed which Poe as a child (represented by the sailor, the *voyeur*-onlooker at the crime) had seen and stored away in his memory without being able to comprehend.<sup>1</sup> Leaving aside the female characters for the moment, let us consider the capital problem of the identity of the murderer.

Now while Dupin was explaining his subtle inductions as to the character of the presumed assassin without having as yet revealed his conclusions, and just as he had suggested the possibility that some connection might be found to exist between the strength and agility evidenced by the murderer and his strange inhuman utterance, his friend feels himself "on the verge of comprehension without power to comprehend—as men, at times, find themselves upon the brink of remembrance, without being, in the end, able to remember"—and as Poe himself must have felt in regard to his repressed memories of intercourse between his parents.

Who, then, were these "parents"? There can be no doubt that the murders in the Rue Morgue were inspired by a regression to an earlier stage of Poe's childhood than that dominated by John and Frances Allen—to Elizabeth Arnold, in fact, and some sexual partner of hers. It was these poor wandering actors, not orderly middle-class John Allan and his wife, whose intimate life Edgar would have had the best opportunity to observe as a child.

And here we come face to face once more with the problem to which our interpretation of *Loss of Breath* was in large part devoted. Was David Poe (here split into two figures: the ridiculous, impotent actor, and the sexual aggressor who violates the mother under cover of darkness) the sole prototype of the orang-outang, the violator-castrator-murderer, incarnation of the unchained forces of instinct? Or had another figure been superposed in the child's mind over that of David Poe—the figure of Elizabeth Arnold's unknown lover, the supposed father of Rosalie, and hence perhaps the writer of the letters which, kept at first in their casket, passed to Rosalie as her legacy from her mother, then

<sup>1</sup> The sailor remains invisible to the ape until after the murder has been accomplished. Similarly, the quality of invisibility necessary to the *voyeur* in general, is also conferred upon the *suiveur*, the observant follower, in *The Man of the Crowd*.



to Edgar, and finally to Mrs. Clemm, who burned them with her own reverent hands? The probabilities seem to be more evenly divided here than in *Loss of Breath*, where the theme of infidelity associated with a packet of letters is particularly stressed.

However, our own view inclines rather to the second hypothesis. First of all, the theme of the letters is again present in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. On the scene of the crime, "a small iron safe was discovered under the *bed* (not under the bedstead). It was open, with the key still in the door. It had no contents, beyond a few old letters, and other papers of little consequence". Of very great importance, we should object, were we to translate the latent content of the phrase. Further on, our emendation is even given confirmation by the sailor-*voyeur*, the only witness of the crime. "Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter," he tells us, "habited in their night clothes, had apparently been arranging some papers in the iron chest already mentioned, which had been wheeled into the middle of the room. It was open, and its contents lay beside it on the floor." There is a definite contradiction between the two passages. *After* the crime, the letters and papers are found *in* the coffer; *before* the crime, the entire contents were scattered about the floor. Neither the murderer nor his victims can be supposed to have taken the trouble to replace the papers in the casket. There may be an indirect allusion here to the fate of Elizabeth Arnold's letters, which she kept with her, easily accessible or visible, as long as she lived, but which were *shut up* in a casket, along with her secret, when she died. At all events, in the last analysis it is because of the letters which they have had the unlucky impulse to examine by lamp or candle light at three o'clock in the morning, that Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter are killed. In the latent thought lying below the surface of the tale, the letters are charged with guilt.

But there is still further evidence in support of our thesis that Poe was convinced in his unconscious of his mother's infidelity and even undoubtedly possessed unconscious recollections going to support that belief. The secluded life led by Mme L'Espanaye and her daughter is repeatedly insisted upon. They saw no one, and lived in the utmost retirement. This doubtless reflects a wish fantasy on the part of the child to the effect that his mother should keep all men at a distance. And the fantasy persists, in more materialistic vein, though still expressed symbolically. We see Poe,

without knowing it, adopting a *room* as the symbol of woman.<sup>1</sup> But the room in which the murders have been committed is found hermetically sealed by the first witnesses to arrive on the scene; the corridor door, the trap-door, and all the windows are securely closed.

The chimney into which the daughter's corpse has been thrust is the only existing aperture. Even there, however, penetration to any considerable distance has not been possible.

But again, as in Edgar's infancy, the male has succeeded in making his way into this sealed enclosure. First we have the mystery of the mutilated window-nail, undoubtedly a piece of "furniture symbolism" representing castration of the mother. Again, the window, like the woman's body after coitus, closes of its own accord once the act is accomplished and the criminal gone. To all appearances the room is once more closed and intact. But we have seen to what fearful dangers the mother has exposed herself by merely leaving her window open. Here, Mephisto's warning would not have proved sufficient: it is not merely with ring on finger that a woman can safely open her door or window, but at no time and under no circumstances! To Poe, the sexually impotent, who had seen his mother bleed from the lungs and die after having submitted (undoubtedly also in his presence) to the embraces of her husband or his possible successor, coitus appeared to be fatal to the woman, just as it threatened castration to the man by means of the "toothed vagina". Thus Madame L'Espanaye committed two fatal mistakes: she sorted some old letters, and she left her window open. The biographical and symbolic significance of these two circumstances conditioning her assassination is now perfectly clear.

But one important element of the tale, in addition to the theme of the letters in the casket, goes to show who Poe unconsciously imagined to have been the violator-castrator-murderer of his mother. The ape, who in his brute force is the very opposite of Chantilly, the weakling, violently pushes Mlle L'Espanaye's body up into the chimney as far as it will go. If Mme L'Espanaye is the mother, disparagingly represented as an old woman (cf. also

<sup>1</sup> This symbolism is of frequent occurrence, and is even reflected in German in the term *Frauenzimmer* (literally *woman-room*), which is used, often in a pejorative sense, as a synonym for *woman*.

the heroine of *The Spectacles*<sup>1</sup>), then Mlle L'Espanaye, her daughter, evidently stands for Rosalie. Now Rosalie's body, when found, was "quite warm"; it had been pushed up the chimney head downward (the position occupied by the embryo in the mother's womb) by the powerful arm of the anthropoid. We have seen that the room represents the mother's body. By an equally common piece of symbolism, the chimney stands for the maternal vagina, or rather *cloaca*—it being the latter alone which figures in the infantile sexual theories destined to survive in the unconscious. In thus inserting the young girl into the chimney, so firmly that the combined strength of four or five men is needed to extricate her, the ape has accomplished, symbolically speaking, the act of inserting or "implanting" a child in the womb by means of coitus. Coitus itself is depicted in the tale in two distinct phases: first, the symbolic penetration and castration (decapitation) of the old woman by means of the phallic razor; and second, as a natural consequence of that act, the insertion of Mlle L'Espanaye into the chimney, symbolic of the mother's inner genital regions. The mother appears in each of the two pictures in a different guise: in the first, she takes human form, as the old woman; in the second, she is the symbolic room containing the fireplace-cloaca.

But as we already know, the actual "implanting" of Rosalie in Elizabeth Arnold's womb had given rise to much suspicion. Who, demanded gossip, was responsible for the deed? And John Allan took up the question with cruel insistence. It would appear to be precisely this same problem which Poe has set before us in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the first detective story in history. The figure of Dupin, venerable ancestor of Sherlock Holmes and of the whole race of later detectives, was perhaps created for the sole purpose of solving for Poe's unconscious the enigma of his sister's paternity.

If Elizabeth Arnold's unknown lover was the father of Rosalie, then Edgar may actually have seen him in the act of possessing the young actress in the dim light of the shabby hotel rooms which the child shared with his mother during her theatrical tours. At that time, Edgar was somewhere between eighteen months and two years old. Small wonder, therefore, that thirty years later he should have found himself "on the brink of remembrance" without being able

<sup>1</sup> *The Spectacles* (sent to R. H. Horne in April, 1844; *Broadway Journal*, II, 20).



to remember, "on the verge of comprehension, without power to comprehend". But his unconscious memories were enough to give him a sense of pride in his profound knowledge, which contrasted so favorably with the groping ignorance of the Prefect of Police (a derisive representation of the father). However much the Prefect, like John Allan, may have to say about the crime which engendered Rosalie, it was *he*, little Edgar, who actually witnessed it from his solitary point of vantage in some dim corner of the room. The childish *voyeur*, like the simple seaman of the tale, could subsequently have appeared before the tribunal of the adult intelligence (doubly represented here by Dupin, the analyst, and his friend the narrator-recorder), and could there have revealed, as the sole direct witness of the crime, young as he was at the time, the identity of Elizabeth Arnold's illicit assailant—and of Rosalie's real father.

But the name of the man who is thus rightly or wrongly brought under suspicion, is not made known. Elizabeth Arnold's hypothetical lover keeps his secret to the end. We know him here only as the fierce anthropoid, incarnation of the aggressive and bestial instincts which, to the mind of the child, with its primitive sadistic conception of coitus, appear to preside over the accomplishment of the sexual act. But that young Edgar, like all children, felt the same instincts present in germ within himself, and tended, in the atavistic depths of his own being, to identify himself with the savage and bestial father whom he admired as much as he condemned, is shown by a single detail of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. When the owner of the ape enters Dupin's rooms, the first words addressed to him by the detective are as follows: "I suppose you have called about the Ourang-Outang. Upon my word, I almost envy you your possession of him; a remarkably fine, and no doubt a very valuable animal. How old do you suppose him to be?"—"I have no way of telling", answers the sailor, "but he can't be more than four or five years old."—It is not our purpose to discuss here the question of whether an orang-outang of this age could actually have performed all the exploits attributed to him by Poe in the tale; he might conceivably have done so, considering the great strength attained by these animals while still very young. But what does interest us is the fact that Poe, without any real reason for doing so, assigns an age to the animal—an age which, without being fixed precisely, corresponds to that of a child. It

may well be that Dupin's "envy" of the sailor for his ownership of the "remarkably fine" young (i.e., child) orang-outang, though apparently inspired merely by professional strategy, is in reality an expression of the regret felt by Poe, the reasoning adult, for the loss of the instincts which had once been his, and which still flourished with undiminished vigor in the pretty boy adopted by the Allans—savage instincts, precociously inflamed by the sight of his parents' embraces, and not yet stifled by repression. Happy indeed were the days when the small watcher could still identify himself with his savagely potent "father"!

But repression has already begun to set in by the end of the tale. The good father (the bank clerk Le Bon), who had been unjustly suspected of the crime, is absolved and set at liberty (a new David?); while the bad ape (perhaps in punishment, as on a pillory) is exposed to the public gaze in a cage at the Jardin des Plantes. We are reminded of the questions and judgments by which children divide all humanity into "good" and "bad", without any intermediate gradations.

Since the publication of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* in 1842, a growing mass of detective fiction has arisen to amuse, mystify, and thrill succeeding generations of readers. The unconscious source of our interest in narratives of this type lies, as Freud first led me to recognize, in the fact that the researches conducted by the detective reproduce, by displacement on to subjects of a quite different nature, our infantile investigations into matters of sex.

In the preceding pages we have studied certain elements which must have entered into the investigation of the mystery of sexual assault upon the mother (whether he knew her by the name of Frances, Elizabeth, or, through transference, as Virginia) which undoubtedly preoccupied Poe in infancy. In *The Man of the Crowd*, the first of the tales which we have grouped together in the "Cycle of the Murdered Mother", we saw the tall, sinister figure of the Father pacing through the London streets, the very incarnation of the crime of which a John Allan might be assumed to be guilty. But with *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the figure of the Father reverts to its true prototypes, David Poe and—doubtless—his wife's unknown lover. Finally, with *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* we may distinguish a definite shifting of the outlines

of the criminal father (David Poe, or the unknown lover) on to the figure of the son himself. The criminal, a naval officer, recalls in certain respects Henry Poe, Edgar's brother, with whom the poet had at one period identified himself in constructing his imaginary autobiography. In *The Black Cat*, this shift has definitely taken place. Identification with the guilty and envied father is complete (though only, be it added, in the world of fiction), and it is Edgar Poe himself who takes the floor in the first person, and triumphantly confesses in the criminal's name the crime which he has committed with his own hands.

*Translated by* BARBARA SESSIONS



# EDGAR ALLAN POE

BY HANNS SACHS (BOSTON)

In this study we have the first example of a psychoanalytical investigation which does not content itself with examining a sector of the unconscious of an artist, a creative period in his life, or some particular creative trend exhibited in him, but which embraces the man and his work as an undivided whole. Nothing has been omitted, as has been unavoidable in all previous expositions; all the various threads, major and minor, in this very complicated fabric, which pass from Edgar Allan Poe's experiences of childhood and impressions of adolescence, his ardors and inhibitions, his neurosis and addiction, into his poetic creation and fantasy-world, are traced with patience, penetration and an untiring zeal for interpretation. This extensive, difficult, often impenetrable and seemingly contradictory material is scrutinized with all the resources of analytical understanding. Though many a detail may still remain problematic, the main outlines of Poe's inner life have been set forth once and for all by this study, and a full light shed for the first time upon the mysterious fascination exerted by this errant spirit so torn between opposites, so rent by warring forces. A study so profound cannot but be of unconscionable length, but one is fully repaid for the attention it demands.

Those who penetrate, circle after circle, as did Dante into the Inferno, into the life of Poe, pushing on from its superficial and incidental aspects into its core, will likewise find at each stage, as in the Inferno, new torture, despair, and throes of self-annihilation.

First of all there is the fact that the poet was born at a time when his country was faced with two great tasks, the conquest of the new world of machinery and of a whole continent—

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A propos *Edgar Poe, Eine Psychoanalytische Studie von Marie Bonaparte. Mit einem Vorwort von Sigmund Freud.* Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1934.

the two demanding the utmost outward expenditure of energy. In this new world before whose ruthless realism old Europe was shuddering, wandered a dreamer, a man who lived only in his own introspective fantasy, like a somnambulist amid the noise and din of a steel plant. The contrasts which he presents only increase and intensify, the closer one views his life. He is born as the fatherless son of a strolling actress, and is thereafter reared in the bosom of a patrician family; he is dependent during all his life on other people's help, practically a beggar, were it not that others begged for him, yet possessed of the bearing and the native pride of a "Southern gentleman"; he is a poet who seeks and finds escape in the barracks, a passionate and impetuous lover who yet runs away in fright from the object of his suit, the most affectionate husband of a mortally sick child and at the same time a constantly relapsing drunkard.

Poe's curve of life is a zigzag, the abrupt turning points of which are clearly visible. He was born in Boston, easily the most un-Bostonian character who ever saw the light of day there. His mother was a young actress, beautiful, but not extraordinarily talented, without means and—as was a matter of course at this time for one of her profession in America—without social standing. His father, who came of good family and who, though devoid of talent, had turned for unknown reasons to the theatre, disappeared at about the time of Edgar's birth—either died or ran away. The young wife developed tuberculosis about two years later to which she succumbed in Richmond, Virginia, under the most wretched circumstances. Her bare rear room in a milliner's place, the scene of febrile crises and of hemorrhages and finally of his mother's end, was shared by the not yet three-year-old Edgar, and a younger sister, who was probably the child of another father. After the death of his mother two well-to-do families took care of the two waifs, Edgar entering the house of the merchant Allan. He brought nothing with him but the remembrance of blood, death, and love, a miniature of his mother, and a picture of the harbor of Boston with the

admonition written on the back to cherish the city in which his mother had "found the most sympathetic friends". For reasons which can become intelligible only by analytical study, Poe consistently did just the contrary all his life, and attacked and depreciated the city as well as all who came from there.

Mrs. Allan was young and childless, craving love. She and her sister, who lived with her, lavished affection upon the child and yielded to all his wishes. The master of the house was a man possessed of strict principles and of a number of illegitimate children, with the need for self-importance and the craving for power characteristic of a half-cripple who seeks compensation for his infirmity. Although he became a rich man, it was not because of business acumen, but as the favored heir of a wealthy uncle. It seems as if this fact only furthered his developing into a family tyrant. Although he acquiesced in the wishes of his wife in agreeing to admit the child to his household, he successfully opposed formal adoption, which would have given the boy legal rights.

In spite of this situation Edgar grew up like the son of a respected middle class family, partly in England whither a long business trip had led the family, and partly in Richmond. His first youthful love began as a sample of the normal post-puberty development familiar to us. Its object was the still youthful mother of a younger schoolmate, and it ended quickly and tragically: one of those cases where fate seems to intervene from without in order to ensure that the chain with which a life is bound from within (from the unconscious) shall not loosen its fetters. After a few months of mutual lyric ecstasy, during which Poe's first poetical attempts were made, the young woman became insane, and death quickly followed. Poe's first love led him to a grave.

His second early love, for the young girl Elvira, terminated suddenly and abruptly at the end of his first year at the University. He had gone to Charlottesville as the promising, highly talented, generally popular offspring of a good family, but he returned in disgrace, expelled from the society of his equals, not daring to leave the house for fear of his creditors



and of imprisonment for debt. Far worse than this, he had turned in his trouble to the poorest of all psychological escapes, namely, addiction to alcohol. His attitude toward drinking was from the beginning that of the typical addict: he drank hurriedly and without enjoyment, loathing drink, yet driven to it again and again by the irresistible urge of anxiety.

Undoubtedly Allan, the unwilling foster-father, must bear a large share of the blame for the first breakdown. Through his vexatious attitude in money matters, he drove Poe into debt and at the same time estranged him from his beloved by an intrigue in which Elvira's parents participated in order to force her into a marriage with a much older man. Allan now found pleasure in humiliating the abandoned and helpless Poe in every way. For a short time the mediation of the two women was helpful; but things were inevitably approaching a climax, until Poe, after a violent scene, left his home.

During these quarrels Poe behaved in the characteristic manner repeatedly manifested from this time on, which, as an excellent observation in our book shows, betrays its complete analogy with the peculiarity of his courtships, namely, abrupt fluctuations between uninhibited aggression, the unrestrainedness of which leaves no choice to the object (whether loved or hated) other than to offer resistance, and an equally boundless self-surrender which asks for nothing but humiliation and annihilation.

Thus the poor boy suddenly stood in the street, without means or profession, with no other protectors than two weak women, but with the pride of one reared as the son of a gentleman in a feudalistic society, and with the firm resolution to become that for which nobody around him had the slightest use—a poet. His first verses (*Tamerlane*) were published in Boston, unnoticed by all; then sheer necessity compelled him to take what seemed to be a most desperate step, and he enlisted as a common soldier.

Incredible though it may seem, it appears as if the time Poe spent under military discipline in isolated forts was one of the best in his life. He did not drink, gained the sym-

pathy of the officers, who soon promoted him to a position of trust, and the impressions which he received during this time influenced his later works in more than one instance. They belong among the few elements relating to the world of reality in a work otherwise filled exclusively with the cloud-pictures of fantasy.

With the help of a benevolent superior a correspondence with Allan was begun, who, however, as was usually the case with him, procrastinated in bringing about a reconciliation and through this the financial aid which was needed for release from the army. The petty and niggardly man kept his mortally sick wife in suspense by delaying the reunion with her darling, for whom she so ardently longed, and who at that time was only one day's journey from Richmond. In this he was acting as an instrument of fate without realizing it, for when he finally acquiesced, Poe, in spite of his haste, came too late to see his adoptive mother alive. Again fate led him to a corpse.

At the grave, some form of reconciliation was brought about, and at the same time an untenable compromise. Poe was allowed to leave the army, but only to be trained at West Point to become an officer. However, as might have been foreseen, Poe could not endure this for long. The fact alone that he had to be with much younger comrades, whom he dared not entrust with any knowledge about his military past, was scarcely to be borne. He partially made up for this by telling them fantastic stories about his trips to the Orient and to Russia. At any rate, it was impossible for him under the pressure of a strict discipline to occupy himself exclusively with subjects which were uninteresting or repulsive to him. He left West Point without money and with very few belongings, and embarked upon the career of the starving writer, pursued by poverty and dipsomania.

It is not worth while to go into the details of the external life of the next years, for it is a chain of repetitions: Poe goes from New York to Philadelphia, and from there to Baltimore and back again, always busy with the publication of one maga-

zine or another, which eked out a shortlived existence on the meager literary soil of the America of that period. The difficulty was intensified by the fact that the books of English authors like Walter Scott and Dickens could be printed without the payment of royalties. As often as his fascinating individuality succeeded in winning a large number of new readers and supporters, just so often his addiction and his irritability led to a catastrophe, and, driven by need and lured by vague hope, he had to push on to another town. Slowly, very slowly, fame was joined to his misery, singling him out from his contemporaries as the genius of his epoch, who might be judged only according to the standards of the Immortals.

At this time Poe found a substitute for what love, honor and family mean to other men—a highly characteristic substitute, which gives us insight into his unconscious. He was taken into the house of his paternal aunt, Mrs. Clennam, who with the aid of a small pension and ceaseless toil supported a house full of invalids and drunkards (one of whom was Poe's elder brother) and her small daughter, Virginia. The others died, and only the three, Poe, Mrs. Clennam and Virginia, closely attached to each other, remained together. The strangest trio imaginable! The poet, now absorbed in the embodiment of his weird fantasies, now occupied with literary or other quarrels, now entangled in futile courtships which he himself made hopeless; then suddenly breaking out in an attack of drunkenness, after which he had to be nursed, soothed and cared for like a child. The touching figure of "Muddy", enduring without complaint, because her love even transcended forgiveness, always ready to do the meanest work, and even to beg for the two beloved children; and the chubby-faced little girl, running around the house, occasionally copying the work of the poet without understanding it, or delivering his love letters.

The marriage of Poe and Virginia, hardly thirteen years old at the time, can be explained by no other motive than an unconscious one, as Mme. Bonaparte's book so convincingly shows. In the foreground stands the wish to be allowed the closest contact with a beloved one, and to engross her whole life,



without possibility of possession or sexual union. Virginia's childishness protected him against the danger of that craved and fearsome indulgence which he had had to avoid at any price, now by overpowering ruthlessness, now by neurotic flight.

Again fate intervened and drove him in a direction indicated by his unconscious. Virginia was attacked by the same illness as that from which his mother had died. Poe "could not bear to hear of the possibility of her death", but with every fresh hæmorrhage Virginia suffered the similarity to the dreadful impressions of his early childhood increased. Again a dying girl was lying in a narrow, cold back room; this time it was Fordham Cottage, not far from New York, but far enough during the severe winter to make visits and help from town almost impossible. (The house still stands today, in East 193rd Street.) As there was neither heat nor warm covering, the sick girl was wrapped in the old military coat in which Poe had left West Point; on her chest lay a cat; her hands and feet were warmed by Poe and Mrs. Clennam. Only during the very last days could help and nursing be procured. After her death the poet was driven to despair, softened only by a sort of twilight state. He tried to pull himself together; nightly he wandered up and down the garden, supported by the deadly tired Muddy, trying to formulate and clarify his thoughts; but the synthesis of sultry fantasy and ice-cold logic which distinguished the best of his works failed to materialize, and the philosophic, fantastic and absurd treatise "Eureka" resulted. Poe himself believed that he had come very close to the solution of the riddle of the Universe, and—what seems still more megalomaniac—that his work needed only publication to find hundreds of thousands of readers, followers, and converts.

The period in Poe's life which now follows is a sequence of episodes which would strike us as amusing, were they not so horrible. The last act but one of the tragedy, which is at the same time a burlesque—a blindman's buff of the Lemures: Poe, the violent suitor, runs after a whole group of women, offering his bleeding heart again and again, successively, pell-mell,

simultaneously, in a dizzy whirl. In each of them he sees a reincarnation, a ghastly predestination. The first is the woman who helped poor Virginia in her last hours, and then gave motherly assistance to the desperate widower. Most of those who follow are literary ladies, some of whom tried to keep the affair within belle-lettristic limits. But in vain; the same thing always happened. The suitor drove away those whom he seemingly pursued with such desperate fervor, whether simply by the violence of his courtship (he always wanted to marry on the spot), or because at the critical moment he appeared drunk, in a delirium, or after an attempt at suicide. The attempt at suicide takes place in the city of the hated "frogpondians" in Boston, and was made for the purpose of inducing one of the beloved phantoms, a married woman, to come to see him before his end, as in an hour of ecstasy she had promised to do. It can hardly be regarded as accidental that he wanted the city of his early childhood and the first companionship with his mother to be the scene of the last reunion and death. Immediately after this incident he appears in Providence, to arrange for a marriage license and wedding with another woman, an idealistic poetess, who in accordance with the literary fashion of the time was flirting with ether intoxication. The end was always the same; he returned lonely, broken-hearted, and delirious to his "Muddy", who was never too tired or too discouraged to nurse her big child.

This period ends in Richmond, and here a soft gleam of glorification shines upon the sinking man. Had the Gods been gracious towards him, they would have let him die then and there, but the Gods remained ungracious until the end, and did not allow him to break out of the prison of his life by death. However, the man who had been the laughing-stock of aesthetic circles in New York and New England realized that he was received in the country of his youth with respect by his own generation and with veneration by the younger one. Especially since the publication of "The Raven" his fame was established, and at a time when the approaching Civil War was already casting its shadows, the South was welcoming

the fact that it was one of her sons whose artistic and intellectual superiority must be acknowledged—an acknowledgment hitherto supposed to be the inviolable privilege of New England. Poe's lecture on his favorite subject, "The Poetic Principle", which previously had always been given under an unlucky star, was this time delivered in a crowded hall before the élite of Richmond, and found, if not understanding, at least interested and enthusiastic listeners. The poet, who had just recovered from an especially serious attack of delirium, joined the Total Abstinence Society, and publicly took the vow of abstinence, no doubt with the best of intentions since during the intervals when he was free from his craving he felt only disgust for alcohol and believed that he had thrown off its thrall. He visited the scenes of his early memories, found some old friends, but, alas, his old fate also. What must he have felt, he who in seeking phantom reincarnations, was faced with a real *revenant*—the love of his youth, Elvira? Her husband had died in the meantime, she was a widow, no longer young, but still attractive. She had tried to fill the emptiness of her heart with religion, but her strict piety (she reproached herself for continuing a letter after midnight on a Saturday) in no way affected her natural gentleness and charm. Naturally Poe courted her with his usual ardor, and it is no wonder that she could not for long resist the lover of her youth. The date for the wedding was fixed, and the poor man was caught in the trap he himself had set, from which there was only one escape. This he chose unwittingly, but with the sureness of aim of the unconscious.

He decided to go to New York, to fetch "Muddy" for the wedding. This was in itself a badly rationalized plan of self-destruction, as Mrs. Clennam was in a better condition to travel alone than Poe, who on such trips always succumbed to his addiction. Indeed, on his last trip to Richmond he had suffered the most severe delirium filled with visions and hallucinations. Moreover, there were a number of premonitory signs, an accumulation of symptomatic acts, the meaning of which is known to every analyst, in fact to everyone



who knows Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. He forgot to inform his bride of the date of his departure, so that she could not say good-bye to him, took along a cane of a friend whom he had visited, but left behind his bag which contained about all he possessed. The testimony of his friends who spent the last evening with him makes it quite clear that at this time he was not drunk, for it was impossible to overlook signs of drunkenness in him. He must have been under the pressure of an unbearable state of anxiety, which drove him irresistibly to alcohol.

It has been said that Poe fell into the hands of a gang which, in accordance with the election customs of the time, attacked defenseless people, preferably foreigners, filled them with alcohol and kept them locked up in this condition until there should be an opportunity to drag them to the ballot-box. All that can be said in proof of this is that at that time there were elections at Baltimore, and that the inn in which Poe was found shortly before his end was not far from one of these so-called "chicken-coops". The whole story has somewhat the flavor of the idealizing legends dear to every biographer, and tries to change Poe from the dipsomaniac he was into an innocent victim of criminals. As a matter of fact, this last episode of his life is of no importance. For a long time Poe was a marked man, and the old conflict which flared up again on the occasion of his engagement did not admit of any other solution, even without the intervention of external circumstances, than the fulfilment of his inherent craving for self-destruction.

The analysis of Poe's works, which is the subject of our book, gives clear and valuable information regarding the nature of this conflict which traverses the poet's entire life. We cannot have any doubt as to which were the strongest, most traumatic impressions of his early childhood: the sudden drying-up of the first, ardently craved source of nourishment, the milk from his mother's breast, for which the child did not find a substitute, and for which he longed all the more as his existence was affected by hunger and privations. Secondly, the primal scene, after the boy had seen his mother in the

embrace of a man (probably the unknown father of the younger sister). Poe's unconscious obviously identified this man with the "sympathetic friends in Boston" mentioned in the inscription on the picture left him by his mother, together with her miniature, and this was the reason for his hatred of his birth-place. According to the wellknown sadistic conception he created the fantasy of the defenseless mother falling into the hands of a brutal, bestial creature and being assaulted and raped.

From these impressions of early childhood arise the fundamental motives which run through Poe's works, sometimes conspicuously, sometimes suppressed, disguised, and distorted, but to be reconstructed with the help of the interpretation bestowed upon it. The innumerable allusions, sometimes very slightly veiled, to cannibalism and especially to necrophagy thus become understandable, as well as the large part which is played by the teeth and everything relative to biting, and the meaning of "white", which stands out especially in "Gordon Pym". In this tale the warm white stream finally leads him who has advanced where nobody has been before, towards a mysterious apparition (surely rightly interpreted as the mother). This fantasy leads on to the return to the womb, a wish-fulfilment which, in the case of Poe, seems to be always combined with horror.

Those who are entirely unfamiliar with Poe's life could reconstruct the main points in his biography from the results of this analysis, from the excellent method by which the infantile experiences are related to the unconscious fantasies contained in his works. What else can we expect of the orally dissatisfied child, who saw the life flood streaming away from his mother and who during his whole life was entertaining, and at the same time fighting against, the repressed desire to incorporate her milk, her blood, her body, but that he should become a drunkard? What else could offer him intoxication and therewith freedom from anxiety and compensation, orgasmic satisfaction and at the same time self-destruction, but innumerable attacks of inebriation? Was he not compelled, in his violent

courting, to imitate the man who had possessed his mother, and at the last moment to recoil in horror and to seek refuge in regressing to the level of oral satisfaction? It is clear that Poe, although he ardently desired many women, was psychically impotent. The marriage with Virginia offered a way of salvation, since genital union with the thirteen year old girl, who remained a child during all of her short life, was out of the question, while through her illness she even became the very picture of his mother.

No landscape of Poe has the pure air of heaven; every one of them is filled with the sultry atmosphere of a dream world. In all his rooms and halls, as well as in dens and caves, an unspeakable terror lurks, the festivals are distorted, love ends with horror, and everywhere there reappears the corpse, the apparition of one buried alive, the body which one has smuggled on board a ship, the body of the woman pressed into a chimney by the wild ape, the bodies which are eaten by animals or men—and so on, in endless variation of the same theme.

It is a psychoanalytical principle that even the most abstract thinking that seems to have originated solely from the purest logic nevertheless cannot completely disavow its origin, its instinctual source in the unconscious. In the case of Poe this principle is strikingly manifested. The sagacious dialectics of his essay on poetical composition lead him to the same goal as the seemingly free working fantasy—a corpse. His conclusion regarding the mystery of poetical composition is: the most sublime theme for poetry is the death of a beautiful young girl.

We here come to the problem of the relation between form and content in a work of art. Whence comes this preference, so characteristic of Poe, for sharp analytical reasoning? In this he wraps not only his theoretical investigations, but also, preferably, the most fantastic products of his imagination. Just because of this tendency he became the father of a new literary species, of the analytical detective story. In opposition to the wild ape, the wily minister, the abductor and murderer of a young girl, stands the cool thinker who, without ever coming



forth into the daylight, disperses all darkness and solves all mysteries. The author of *Edgar Poe* has proved in a very interesting discussion that the play of forces in the soul of a poet, the conflict between the censor and compelling instinct, has created this outlet. Just as Poe in reality fled from the fear of sexual contact into alcoholism, so in his imagination he sought escape in cold, dispassionate logic. By this form of art he intrigued his superego into permitting him to surrender himself to his unconscious fantasies, and gave the reader the possibility of finding pleasure in the horrible and participating without reproach in what is most profoundly forbidden. The most essential, well-nigh unconscious fantasies seem in this treatment only the means to an end, as the material by means of which the correct logical reasoning may be proven, or as the sin over which ethic pathos triumphs.

The foregoing remarks only trace a few main outlines of this comprehensive work, but are sufficient, it is to be hoped, to awaken in the reader the interest to which the analytic importance of the subject, the insight brought to bear upon it, and the depth and clarity of its presentation entitle it.

*Translated by* MARGARET J. POWERS

# THE MENSTRUATION COMPLEX IN LITERATURE

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Some of the material used in this paper has already been subjected to interpretation (though not with the particular orientation for which it is being employed here) in a psycho-analytical study of the life of the French poet, Baudelaire, by Dr. René Laforgue,<sup>1</sup> in which work the author discusses the influence of the mother complex with sympathy and penetration, though he furnishes a rationalized explanation for the incest barrier rather than traces its cause to a universal factor such as the menstruation complex,<sup>2</sup> a concept which has become so clear to me personally that I cannot imagine a psychoanalyst working without it. The unresolved menstruation complex in the analyst constitutes a barrier to the establishment of the mother transference which of necessity must put a limit to the extent of any analysis. Nevertheless Laforgue has produced a wealth of material much of which, as I shall hope to show in this paper, continually goes back to the vaginal bleeding of the mother as the nucleus of the incest barrier.

A great deal has been written in regard to the son's sense of guilt in relation to the parricidal and incestuous wishes prompted by his positive œdipus complex, whilst comparatively little has been written concerning the matricidal tendencies and guilt towards the mother, or of the fear of retaliation by

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This study in applied psychoanalysis complements my paper on *The Nucleus of the Œdipus Complex* (to be published in German) and provides additional evidence in support of that theory from extra-psychoanalytical sources. It is to be followed by another paper, *The Mother Complex in Mythology and Art*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Defeat of Baudelaire*. London: Hogarth Press, 1932. (Int. Ps-A. Library, No. 21.)

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that I am opposed to Laforgue's theory of the "Onlooker"; rather would I confirm it by pointing out its phylogenetic pre-human parallel in the days when the younger members of the horde were compelled to look on at the primal scene from a distance, in impotent fear and dread of being eaten by the primal male.

her. The part played by the projected mother in the super-ego is also less clearly defined than that of the father.

Laforgue takes us through all the vicissitudes of Baudelaire's emotional career, fully exposing, though not completely interpreting, the "Kali",<sup>1</sup> and the "Durga"<sup>1</sup> aspects of the poet's soul—that is, the aggressive mother with the penis, *behind which lurks the bleeding woman, and at a deep level, the female "in heat"*: the black woman of all mythologies and of our dreams, the mother who first arouses all our love and passion and then through correction, and the bloody manifestations of her periods, erects a barrier against which men (in whom sublimation has failed) may struggle for the remainder of their days, in order to obtain even a minimum of normal happiness. In the chapter on the sado-masochism of Baudelaire's poetry, this is brought out clearly by Laforgue, and provides similar evidence to that found in my interpretation of the mother in Hindu mythology;<sup>2</sup> the mother's *black* character representing the displacement of the son's guilt on to her.

The first poem quoted in this chapter, *Duellum*, is one which corresponds to the Durga myth of Hindu mythology. The woman is transformed into a man with a sword (=penis), and the battle represented is that between the mother and the son, who, exasperated by love, rolls into a ravine (=vagina) which is infested with lynxes and ounces (=father). These animals symbolize the fear of being killed and eaten by the father, who with his penis is incorporated in the mother's vagina.

The last verse shows the hate of the son for the mother who has spurned his passion at the height of the primary genital phase:

*Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé!  
Roulons-y sans remords, amasone inhumaine,  
Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine!*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hindu Mother Goddess in her aggressive aspects.

<sup>2</sup> Daly: *Hindu Mythology and the Castration Complex*.

<sup>3</sup> Italics by C. D. D.



These poems bring out clearly the struggle of the son with his passionate desire for the mother, and show that the first passionate attachment is not easily given up. Even when the evidence of the mother's bloody vagina confirms his castration and death fears, the son's infantile libido *before undergoing repression struggles to maintain its object*. Unable to contemplate her bloody aspect, he denies it and adorns her with a penis in order that he may retain her as a libidinal object.

In the poem entitled, *À une madonne*, the conversion of the son's libido into sadism is well brought out.

The mother is raised to the position of a virgin, whom the son hates, reveres, and unconsciously desires, as is shown by his telling her that "she may trample on this serpent (penis=passion) which consumes him—and jeer at it, *all swollen with hate and spittle*. Oh Victorious Queen . . . Queen of Virgins", etc. (Victorious Queen=Kali<sup>1</sup>=Durga in Hindu Mythology, Judith in Jewish Mythology, etc. c. d. d.) "Finally, to make your rôle of Mary complete and to mix love with barbarism, O dark voluptuousness, I (a remorseful Executioner) shall make seven very sharp knives of the seven deadly sins, and like an insensible juggler, I shall take your deepest love for target and shall plant them all in your panting heart, in your bleeding, dripping heart."

The poem *La destruction* shows the displacement of the hatred of the father on to the mother, *because of her bleeding vagina*. The Devil in this poem takes the place of the most seductive of women (=mother) who accustoms his lips to *infamous philters*, first with her breasts and then with her sexual tropisms, and thus leads him far from the sight of God. (The ideal father who abhors incest.) This devil in the form of the mother "*throws soiled clothes, and open wounds, and the*

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Kali myth of Hindu Mythology with Baudelaire's *Hymne à la beauté*:

*Tu marches sur des morts, Beauté, dont tu te moques,  
De tes bijoux l'Horreur n'est pas le moins charmant  
Et le Meutre, parmi tes plus chéris breloques,  
Sur ton ventre orgueilleux danse amoureusement.*

*blood-stained dressings of destruction at my confused eyes*".<sup>1</sup>

Who will doubt that this represents a repressed memory of the mother's menstrual periods?

The poem entitled *Une martyre* shows the menstruation complex in all its completeness, and provides the most vivid evidence that the vaginal bleeding is the confirmation of the fear of castration and death. This poem brings out also how this conflict causes the repression of pleasure in association with sexual odors, and a revulsion of feeling towards that which was once considered beautiful. Let us briefly summarize the contents of this poem.

"In a warm room in which *the perfumed air is dangerous and lethal, a decapitated corpse pours out red and living blood*—whilst the head reposes like a flower on the bed table."

The description of this room makes it clear that the poet is describing his mother's bedroom, and that her sexual organ (=the bleeding corpse=bleeding vagina) is evidence of her castration, symbolized by decapitation (displacement upwards). Castration in its turn is a symbol of death. The poet himself is of course the murderer, whilst the cut off head (=penis) is shown to have the attractive qualities of the vagina "in heat" displaced upon it, thus depriving it of its "horrid" or "castrated" aspect—it is said to *repose on the table like a flower*.

"*On the bed, the naked trunk exposes without scruple and with the most complete abandon the secret splendor and the fatal beauty which nature gave it!*"

The poet employs displacement, to describe the female sexual organ—the rose-colored stocking, and the *garter*,<sup>2</sup> which he likens to a *secret flaming eye*, after which he describes the provocative nature of his mother, talking of a dark love, a guilty joy, and strange feasts with many infernal kisses. He asks whether "her exasperated spirit welcomes these *thirsty* and *lost* desires", and whether "the vindictive man—whom you *were*

<sup>1</sup> Italics mine. C. D. D.

<sup>2</sup> Readers who were present at the Oxford Psychoanalytical Congress will recall my interpretation of the "garter" which I brought into relation with the forgotten order of that most noble decoration, the English Order of the Garter.

never able to satisfy while you were alive, in spite of so much love—overwhelmed your inert complaisant flesh with the immensity of his desire”.

The deeply repressed incestuous desire, as well as the impotent sadism of the poet, and the matricidal aspects of his oedipus complex, are fully exposed in this poem:

“Answer, O impure corpse! Tell me, O terrible head, did he take you by your stark hair and lift you with a feverish arm, and press his eternal farewells upon your cold teeth?”

In *Les metamorphoses vampire*,<sup>1</sup> Baudelaire shows how his mother for him became transformed into a vampire.

Laforegue, in speaking of the ineffaceable traces of the great passion of the poet's childhood, asks “What was he unconsciously seeking in the perfumes that enslaved him,<sup>2</sup> but to find again the intoxicating odor of that muff in which, as a boy of seven, he used to bury his face?”

This memory, however, is not unconscious but, we postulate, is a cover memory for the more deeply repressed sexual odors which exercised the chief part in arousing his incestuous passion at a far earlier age (two to three) and before his primary oedipus complex had caused the repression of his incestuous

<sup>1</sup> In the dreams of one of my patients, his mother sucks the blood of his enemies, father and brothers, sucking them to death, whilst he gains sadistic pleasure from observing the suffering in their faces as their life's blood is gradually extracted from them. In the worst of his nightmares this vampire turns upon him and fastens her fangs into his throat, when he awakens with a shriek of terror. Analysis disclosed an oral fixation on the mother, reinforced by regression from the menstruation trauma after first, the pregnancy and parturition jealousy and second, envy and hate of the sucking infant rival had raised his hatred of the mother to the highest degree—her pregnant condition and finally the advent of the sucking child arousing almost unbelievable hatred, accompanied by excessive masturbation resulting in castration threats from the mother—which at first doubted, were finally confirmed by the sight of her bleeding when her periods began again. C. D. D.

<sup>2</sup> See conclusion of my paper “The Nucleus of the Oedipus Complex”. I base my interpretation here upon my self-analysis. Muffs and furs have always had an irresistible attraction for me, both their odor and their feel arousing the strongest desire in me—analysis left no doubt as to the genesis of this excitation.



passions, which carried with it into repression the memory of his former delight in her sexual odors.

Speaking of the poet's mistress Jeanne, Laforgue says, "When she was young and beautiful, why did he always ask her to keep on her jewels when she undressed, if it was not that the tinkling of necklaces and pendants reawakened in him the memory of long-past ecstasies?"

This explanation, it would seem to me, correct no doubt as far as it goes, is yet insufficient. To arrive at the correct solution of the problem, those who cannot discover it in self-analysis must have recourse to the symbolism of jewelry in poetry and mythology. The picture of Kali<sup>1</sup> gives the correct solution: jewelry symbolizes masculinity—the denial of the bleeding vagina. The jewelry thus protected Baudelaire against his castration fears and cruel impulses towards his mistress.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, in the chapter entitled *The Barrier*, Laforgue deals with certain aspects of the œdipus complex, as evidenced in Baudelaire's resumé of Poe's *Black Cat*, from which we will extract the salient points and comment on them.

The story is of a man and a wife who in the early stages of their marriage were exceptionally fond of animals, which passion was said to have been bequeathed to them by their parents. After a time the affairs of the pair go badly and the man withdraws into the dark reveries of the tavern (=his own soul). He gradually displaces his emotions on to a pet cat, the repressed hatred of his parents which is now being called to the surface (but not acknowledged consciously) by his relations with his wife; the partial explanation of which is no doubt to be traced to two similar circumstances, which may be observed in many married people.

As the early passions of marriage wear off, the woman

<sup>1</sup> Daly, C. D.: *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> I would ask those colleagues who are sufficiently interested, to compare the picture of Kali and my published though embryonic interpretation thereof in *Imago* with the *Hymne à la Beauté*, published on page 49 of Laforgue's intriguing book.

gradually takes the place of the mother, as a result of which *the incest barrier rises between them*. The wife's demonstrations of affection decrease with the subsidence of her early passion, and the husband's repressed antagonism coming to the surface expresses itself in bad temper and resentment or in sullen and taciturn behavior.

Often, as in this particular case, the husband withdraws into himself and drinks, a sign of his regression to the oral level parallel to that which occurred in childhood following the menstruation trauma.

The sadness and gloom which overtake such persons arises because deep in their souls they have been unable to give up their incestuous longings, and at the same time have been unable to satisfy their feelings of revenge. Death wishes emerge, first felt against the father who comes between them and their love object, *and later concentrated towards the image of all love, their mother, who inhibits their love at the height of their infantile genitality—thus bringing about that phase of ontogenetic repression which corresponds to the origin of the menstruation taboo in phylogenesis*.

The story describes the gloomy life in the taverns and the hour of sullen drunkenness—and then briefly shows the displacement of his unconscious tendencies on to the Black Cat. The selection of the title of this story must not escape us, any more than the object and its color. Black is symbolical of hate, guilt and death, and at the deepest psychic level is symbolical of the God of death—the father, but at the level we are dealing with here (which corresponds to the dawn of civilization) it is displaced on to the mother (=woman).

The silent reproaches of a loving wife increase the irritation of a man who is drinking because of his inhibited sexuality. The repulsion which his condition causes in his former loving partner further offends him. His sadness and taciturnity increase. In the story he displaces all these feelings on to the beautiful and once loved black cat "Pluto", which, once so friendly and affectionate, now flees from him in his drunken condition. This silent reproach increasingly irritates the man

until one night he takes out his knife (=penis) and gouges out one of its eyes (=castrates it). The one-eyed bleeding animal flees from him henceforth and his hatred of it grows—which means that his hatred towards his wife grows with the increase of his sexual inhibitions caused by her menstruation, resuscitating his repressed primary œdipus complex. In childhood he had turned in horror from his bleeding mother.

To understand this we can refer to Freud's case of the Wolfman, which shows that the son believed the father to have caused the mother's vaginal bleeding by having stuck his penis (=knife) into her. This supposed cruel act of the father furnishes an example to be copied by the child, when his mother's frustration of his amorous advances, combined with her evidence of castration and death, turns his aggressive passion into sadism—the extent of the sadistic hate being conditioned by:—(1) the strength of his libido; (2) the extent of inhibiting effects of the trauma; (3) the emotional nature of the mother; (4) oral and anal predisposition.

The author makes the man attribute his action to the spirit of perversity, rather than to his repressed passion.

"In the meantime the cat slowly recovered. The socket of the lost eye [castration symbol, also death symbol, i.e., penis—no penis; self—no self] presented a frightful appearance, but *he* no longer seemed to suffer pain". You will notice that so far the author always speaks of the cat as *he*—showing clearly the relation which the hero's act bears to both parents, and how castration and death were first feared from the father, against whom similar wishes were first directed. He is thus in fancy copying his father in the sadistic assault on his mother, now adorned with a penis, and at the same time satisfying his repressed castration wish against the father in the revenge he takes on the mother surrogate, on to whom all the previous hatred of his father has been displaced. The black tom-cat symbolizes his mother with a penis, and his father as well.

The second part of the story brings out very clearly how this hatred of the father (=Black Cat) is displaced on to the wife



(=mother) as a result of the reactions called forth by her bleeding eye (=menstruating vagina=castration and death).

One evening he saw on one of the casks in the tavern a black cat very similar to the one that he had mutilated. *The source of his deepest hatred* is very subtly hidden here. A cask, we know from dreams, symbolizes a woman and this sentence shows the cause of his having castrated and killed the first cat, since the cat on the cask symbolized the father on mother, i.e., the primal scene. It is a very common mechanism for dreams to picture the act first, and then to show the cause of the act afterwards. The wish to kill the father is the result of the son's (the "onlooker's", Laforgue) hate of the father being brought to its height by the son's impotency in the presence of the father copulating with the mother, the source of which hate is deeply imbedded in the id.

The hero makes friends with this beautiful black cat, which resembled his own cat, and takes it home to console his wife, showing clearly that it was the father whom he had just slain (or the father in the mother=penis, *via* displacement). The next day, however, it is discovered that this cat is blind in one eye, *and, moreover, in the same eye*. We cannot overlook the fact that he is only supposed to have made the discovery the "next day" that the cat was not a normal male cat with a penis, but a castrated cat, that is to say, a female and not a male, which further symbolizes an accusing cat. For with the evidence of her castration (=her vagina), she reminds the son (=the husband) that he had had guilty wishes of castration and death towards his father, and incest with his mother (and later death wishes against the mother), because her supposed castration (that is, her vagina) is a continual reminder of his own evil wishes, *which prevent reconciliation with his father*. Yet his sadistic act in slaying the displaced father in the mother also includes his repressed incestuous wish.

In his perverse killing of the first cat, after gouging out its eye, the man is made to describe his act thus:—"I slipped a noose about its neck, and hung it to the limb of a tree; hung

it with tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart; hung it<sup>1</sup> *because* I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt that it had given me no reason for offense; hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it—if such a thing were possible—even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the *Most Merciful and Most Terrible God*.”

In slaying the cat he had castrated, he was symbolically committing incest and vicariously repeating the primal crime of parricide.

The second cat is spoken of as “it”, and the reason for this becomes obvious when the sudden transference of the supposed hate of the cat on to the wife (=the mother) is dramatically introduced into the story.

This time it is the friendship of the beast which exasperates him. Its wearisome obsequiousness affects him as a form of vengeance and of irony, of remorse incarnate in a mysterious beast, i.e., Man’s universal remorse as regards woman arising phylogenetically out of his suppression of the female in heat, and ontogenetically from his rejection of the mother as a result of the menstruation trauma.

Here we clearly see that the hate which love engenders when the inhibition of the sexual impulse prevents the libido from taking its normal path in the mystery that surrounds woman, is that behind her symbol of castration and death, and the brutality of the puberty rites (from which for countless generations woman had to suffer), lie *those very attractions, olfactory and others*, which phylogenetically made man so aggressive that the isolation of woman and repression of instincts at such time became necessary for the salvation of the species, so that the inhibition and partial sublimation of the sexual instincts

<sup>1</sup> Let me remind you that previously the writer referred to the cat as “he”, whilst *now*—the gender having become difficult, since in his sadistic castration he had turned the cat from a father symbol into a mother symbol, whose bleeding eye (=bleeding vagina) continually reminded him of his crime against the father—he is compelled to refer to the cat as “it”.

came about. These instincts formerly disciplined at puberty are now in the interests of our advanced civilization and culture (which requires sublimation at an earlier level) inhibited in very early childhood.

One day the man goes down into the cellar with his wife on some household errand which we interpret as "they were indulging in sexual relations"—meaning in this case, incest. The faithful cat goes with them and causes annoyance by getting entangled in his legs—that is to say, the ghost of his slain father, as symbolized in the resurrected castrated and murdered cat, destroys his ability to enjoy sexual relations. In other words the vagina continually reminds the guilt-ridden son of his fear, his love, and his hatred of his father. The husband is furious with the animal and wants to attack it—that is, to slay the thing which makes sexual enjoyment with her impossible. The wife, however, in order to protect the cat, jumps between them. That is to say, her evidence of castration and death inhibits the normal aggressiveness of his sexual instinct and arouses his sadism, so that he lays her out with one blow of his axe, thus ridding himself of this continual reminder of his guilty *œdipus* wishes. Actually he sinks into the passive negative phase of his *œdipus* complex.

The displacement of the hate from the father on to the mother is clearly depicted in this story, and the immediate cause of it, and man's hate of woman, is shown to be the "bleeding eye", awakening the remorse and guilt that ensue from his repressed parricidal wishes, or to put it briefly, it is the menstruation trauma which confirms *the fear of death and brings about the repression of mother-son incest and is therefore the nucleus of the primary œdipus complex*. It erects the incest barrier, the genesis of which was previously unknown.

The story, however, does not end here, but goes on to explain in detail how the man built the corpse (and inadvertently the cat) into the cellar wall and having done so, slept the sleep of the just, which is interpreted as meaning that the son represses all knowledge of the primary *œdipus* complex, yet the unconscious crimes which he had in his fantasies committed—castra-



tion, parricide, incest, and matricide—leap out and destroy his pleasure in life, the woman's bleeding vagina being a continual reminder of his unconscious guilt.

In the story, having successfully hidden the evidence of his incestuous matricidal and parricidal crimes, his unconscious still drives him to expose his culpability to the police (=the socialized representatives of the father=Law). Not the least extraordinary part of the story is that the cat, which by its plaintive cry exposed the place where the corpse was hidden, and which jumped out from behind it when the wall was removed, has also like the first cat which the man had murdered "one mad bleeding eye". It is on this bleeding eye that the uncanniness and mystery of the story is centered; and it is, we must insist, woman's menstruation that makes her so "uncanny" and "mysterious" to man. For it continually reminds man not only of his fear of castration and of his deeper fear of death, of which castration is a social educational derivative, but also of his earlier repressed incestuous parricidal and matricidal wishes which preceded the former.

The hiding of the bodies in the wall, as we shall presently show, has other meanings, as well as being the temporary successful expression of the hate components of his sexual tendencies. The importance of this story for psychoanalysis lies in the *double* presentation of the black cat and the vicissitudes of the human couple in relation to it. We see the path of the emotional tendencies of the child and his attitude towards the black cat, which in turn symbolizes both of his parents. He entertains castration wishes towards his mother; these he satisfies in the cat, in which he copies his father in what as "onlooker" of the primal scene he believed to be the form the sexual act took. The bleeding eye (menstruating vagina of the woman) remains, however, which aggravates his sense of guilt, and makes him fear retaliation from the father as a punishment for his incestuous act, and also because of his love for the father and *mother*, intense remorse. The black cat with its bleeding eye has now become definitely female, and

shows the path of displacement of the hatred from the father on to the mother. Just as happens with the gods and goddesses.

The bleeding eye (=menstruating vagina=castrated male) aggravates and reminds the man of his wickedness, and so the pain of his guilt being insupportable, with anguish and remorse he strangles this object—namely, the previously loved mother whose bleeding condition forever reminds him of his incestuous desires and crimes.

The cat (=mother) is then resuscitated in the form of a female, with a mad bleeding eye (=a wife with a menstruating vagina). In the first place he castrated his father and then sadistically slew his mother by copulating with her (=strangling her). In the second instance he married (=took to himself a wife=second cat) only to discover that her excessive love, combined with the mystery of her menstruation, was a continual reminder of his past œdipus crimes.

Let me repeat Poe's words:

"This time it is the friendship of the beast that slowly exasperates him. Its wearisome obsequiousness affects him as a form of vengeance, of irony, of remorse incarnate in a mysterious beast." One often sees this in marriage where the husband's love has turned to hate and the wife still loves, and *vice versa*.

Now comes the first of the two truly dramatic instances in the story, the sudden transference of the repressed sadistic hate of the mother (=the castrated cat) on to the wife. The cat got entangled with his legs, that is to say, *something* in the cat (=wife) inhibited his normal enjoyment of the sexual act; and aroused his hate and fury. What that something was is clearly shown in the final dramatic incident. The wife now tries to keep him from venting his fury on the cat, and so draws the hate to herself. That is, he slays her with his axe (=penis), in which act he expresses his repressed sadistic hate which masks his deep passionate love.

The police (=his superego or conscience) now appears on the scene, and compels him to give himself away, the guilt of his matricide (behind which lie patricide and incest) being

more than his ego can support. "The sleep of the just" and his "arrogant boastfulness" are indications of the opposite unconscious tendencies.

Having tapped with his stick (=penis) the spot where his wife (=mother) lies entombed—having touched with his penis the womb in which he had once been enclosed himself—his conscience (=the castrated cat=himself) gives a cry of pain, *thus exposing his remorse and guilt.*

Whereupon the police (superego) pull down the barrier, *and the cat with the mad bleeding eye jumps out from behind the corpse*, exposing the cause of his slaying the wife (=his hatred of all women), namely, that the evidence of the bleeding eye confirms his own fears of castration and death and reminds him of his contemplated sins against society.

## EDGAR ALLAN POE

The story of the *Black Cat* gives us an insight into the nucleus of Poe's œdipus complex. The difference between Poe and Baudelaire is that Poe understood better than Baudelaire the true significance of his œdipus complex, as his stories so fully show. So we will turn to a consideration of other writings of Poe. Let Poe speak for himself, in an extract from *Eleonora*:

"I grant, at least, that there are two distinct conditions of my mental existence, the condition of a lucid reason not to be disputed, and belonging to the memory of events forming the first epoch of my life, and a condition of shadow and doubt, appertaining to the present and to the recollection of what constitutes the second great era of my being. Therefore, what I shall tell of the earlier period, believe; and to what I may relate of the later time, give only such credit as may seem due; or doubt it altogether; or, if doubt it ye cannot, *then play unto its riddle, the Œdipus.*"<sup>1</sup>

The story of *Eleonora* tells of a first love which passes away, but to which the man remains bound, and it is not difficult for us to recognize this first love as his mother.

<sup>1</sup> Poe's works were published before Freud was born, so he was *uninfluenced* by the latter's psychological theories. C. D. D.



"She had seen that the finger of Death was upon her bosom—that, like the ephemeron, she had been made perfect in loveliness only to die; but the terrors of the grave to her lay solely in a consideration which she revealed to me one evening at twilight by the banks of the River of Silence.

"She grieved to think that, having entombed her in the valley of the Many-Coloured Grass, I would quit for ever its happy recesses, transferring the love which now was so passionately her own to some maiden of the outer and everyday world. And then and there I threw myself hurriedly at the feet of Eleonora, and offered up a vow to herself and to Heaven, *that I would never bind myself in marriage to any daughter of Earth*—that I would in no manner prove recreant to her dear memory, or to the memory of the devout affection with which she had blessed me. And I called the Mighty Ruler of the Universe to witness the pious solemnity of my vow. And the curse which I invoked of Him and of her, a Saint in Elusion should I prove traitorous to that promise, *involved a penalty the exceeding great horror of which will not permit me to make record of it here.*<sup>1</sup>

"And the bright eyes of Eleonora grew brighter at my words; and she sighed as if a deadly burthen had been taken from her breast; and she trembled and very bitterly wept; but she made acceptance of the vow (for what was she but a child?), and it made easy to her the bed of her death. And she said to me, not many days afterwards tranquilly dying, that, because of what I had done for the comfort of her spirit, she would watch over me in that spirit when departed, and, if so it were permitted her, return to me visibly in the watches of the night; but, if this thing were indeed beyond the power of the souls in Paradise, that she would at least give me frequent indications of her presence; sighing upon me in the evening winds, or *filling the air which I breathed with perfume from the censers of the angels.* And, with these words upon her lips, she yielded up her innocent life, putting an end to the first epoch of my own."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My italics. C. D. D.

<sup>2</sup> My italics. C. D. D.

### Comment

It is not difficult for us to recognize here the displacement of his fear of death in the fantasy of his beloved's death—whilst the remark “for what was she but a child?” is clearly the acknowledgment that the period belonged to his own childhood. Her promise to fill the air which he breathed with perfume from the censers of the angels fixes the time of his longings to the period before the “menstruation trauma”, i.e., that of the positive œdipus complex. (The positive tropistic phase.) The curse which he invoked of *Him* (the italics are *not* mine) clearly bears out my theory that behind the menstruation trauma lies the deepest hatred of the father, *to reach which we have to work through the hatred which has been displaced on to the woman.*

As regards the nature of the penalty for disloyalty to his mother, which because of its exceeding great horror he was prevented from relating, may we not suppose that this is castration? But the great horror involves more than castration (although it includes it); it involves also the fear of *death*, in this case displaced on to his first love.

As regards Eleonora's fear, that after her lover had “entombed her” in the valley of the Many-Colored Grass (which entombing we have explained in the story of the Black Cat), he would leave her for another woman, this clearly has a deeper significance also. It touches on remorse belonging no doubt in part to the thought that having been born of and nurtured by his mother, he should yet neglect her for another. He is all the time putting into his beloved's mouth words and thoughts which are his own.

Her promises are not forgotten. “Streams of a holy perfume floated ever and ever about the valley, etc.” And: “Once I was awakened from a slumber, like the slumber of death, by the pressure of spiritual lips upon my own.”

“But the void within my heart refused, even thus, to be filled. I longed for the love which had before filled it to overflowing. At length the valley *pained* me through its memories of

Eleonora, and I left it for ever for the vanities and the turbulent triumphs of the world."

The chief interest of this story lies in the second portion, for in spite of the curse, he falls madly in love and weds one Ermengarde—it is the fate of man that he must be unfaithful to his first love. The curse, however, was not visited upon him (as it was in the case of the Black Cat murder); his mother came out of the past in the silence of the night, but not to accuse:—"There came through my lattice the soft sighs which had forsaken me; and they modeled themselves into the familiar and sweet voice saying 'Sleep in peace—for the spirit of love reigneth and ruleth, and, in taking to thy passionate heart her who is Ermengarde, thou art absolved, for reasons which shall be made known to thee in heaven, of thy vows unto Eleonora'."

Poe deals with the same theme in *Ligeia*. *Ligeia* is also a first love—who again we see clearly was his mother; and she too like *Ligeia* dies, and in her death he was fully impressed with the strength of her affection; for death, removing the cause of hate, often releases the springs of love. Just before dying she made him read to her some lines which she had composed. They were these:

"Lo! 'tis a gala night  
Within the Lonesome latter years  
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
In veils, and drowned in tears,  
Sit in a theatre, to see  
A play of hopes and fears,  
While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
The music of the spheres.

"Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
Mutter and mumble low,  
And hither and thither fly;  
Mere puppets they, who come and go  
At bidding of vast formless things  
That shift the scenery to and fro,  
Flapping from out their Condor wings  
Invisible Woe.



"That motley drama—oh, be sure  
 It shall not be forgot  
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
 By a crowd that seize it not,  
 Through a circle that ever returneth in  
 To the self-same spot;  
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin  
 And Horror, the soul of the plot.

"But see, amid the mimic rout  
 A crawling shape intrude  
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
 The Scenic solitude  
 It writhes—it writhes—with mortal pangs  
 The mimes become its food,  
 And the seraphs sob at vermin fangs  
 In human gore imbued.

"Out—out are the lights—out all  
 And over each quivering form,  
 The curtain, a funeral pall,  
 Comes down with the rush of a storm—  
 And the angels, all pallid and wan,  
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm  
 That the play is the tragedy, 'Man',  
 And its hero, the Conqueror Worm."

"'O God', half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines—'O God, O Divine Father, shall these things be undeviatingly so? Shall this conqueror be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who—who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigor? Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'"

And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. Who can doubt but that such a poem has its genesis in the *primal scene*. Though put into the mouth of a woman the fantasies are those of the author Edgar Allan Poe, and show his submission in fear of his father's phallus.

In the second part of the story, as in *Eleonora*, he takes unto himself a second love—but with what a difference—in this case

the hatred of women through the incestual fixation to the mother is exposed.

"That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper, that she shunned me, and loved me but little, I could not help perceiving, but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. *I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to men.*" (My italics. C. D. D.)

The story brings out very dramatically the fulfilment of the death wish against his second wife.

"*Drops of ruby colored fluid falling from some invisible spring, into a glass of wine which he had procured against her fainting from fear.*" Here we see displaced on to woman the traumatic fear of death<sup>1</sup> which the sight of her bleeding occasioned in him—the second wife in this case symbolizing the hated mother whilst the first wife symbolizes the mother whom once he had loved so passionately, until the menstruation trauma occasioned the repression of his passion, and turned him temporarily in hatred and loathing from her, though ever longing deep in his soul for the completion of his incestuous desires.

So in the story he watches by the side of his dead second wife until gradually her corpse comes to life again in the form of his first love Ligeia (=his mother).

## THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

In this story the punishment for the incestuous longings towards the sister is clearly shown to be death. Be it always remembered that *phylogenetically the bleeding occasioned by the rape of the young and ripe female in heat (=sister) must have been man's greatest source of satisfaction and pride, before the incest barrier descended.* In this story Poe conducts us through the positive œdipus complex up to the secondary incest complex (Andromeda-Perseus) which represents the return of the repressed œdipus complex as a result of brother and sister

<sup>1</sup> This provides some evidence for the soundness of Ferenczi's "return to the trauma" theory.

love—a return which is particularly likely to have pathological results in both sexes (because of the heightened libido) at puberty. Let me give you, with extracts, an abridged account of this world renowned story.

The man supposed to be relating the story tells how he was called to the assistance of a boon companion of his boyhood's day, who said that he was suffering from a mental disorder which oppressed him, and he needed his old and only friend's company for the alleviation of his malady. The story commences with a description of the first view of the fateful house he was to visit—"With the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit."

"I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, upon the *vacant eye-like windows* [which is in reality a description of his repressed memories concerning his mother's vagina and womb—C. D. D.] upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul, which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium—the bitter lapse into every-day life—the *hideous dropping of the veil*. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime.

"There grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous indeed that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me.

"I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung *an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity*—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the grey wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible and leaden-hued."

(There is, I think, in view of my past work on the subject, little need to interpret the unconscious source of his description of his mother's vagina and the odors peculiar to it. C. D. D.)

"I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in



waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me in silence through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the somber tapestries of the walls, the ebony blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, *or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy*—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door, and ushered me into the presence of his master.”

(Both valet and physician are symbolic representations of himself and his father, the latter is also represented in the trophies which rattle as he goes through the passage—the sinister physician appearing as he is going upstairs [=copulating] is the superego foreshadowing the fate that will be his for indulging his forbidden desires.)

Next follows a description of his meeting with his friend Roderick Usher, and the nature of the latter's malady, the friend, of course, being the mirror of himself.

His friend's illness, he says, “displaced itself in a host of unnatural sensations. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; *the odors of all flowers were oppressive*; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror”.

“To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. ‘I shall perish,’ said he, *‘I must perish in this deplorable folly.’* (What the folly was is left to the imagination, *he*

wanted to perpetuate the house of Usher by impregnating his sister and at a deeper level to return to his mother's womb—a wish that in the revulsion of feelings occasioned by the menstruation trauma, causes the son in his hate to wish that the mother was dead, buried out of his sight for ever. C. D. D.)

“In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition—I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together in some struggle with the grim phantasm, *fear*.”

“He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwellings which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth.” (The womb symbolism is obvious. C. D. D.)

“He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness—indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution—of a tenderly-beloved sister—his sole companion for long years—his last and only relative on earth. [Behind this tenderness for his sister lie his death wishes against her for being the cause of his temptation. C. D. D.] While he spoke, the lady *Madeline* (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared.”

“The disease of the lady *Madeline* had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with *inexpressible agitation*) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.” (In this we see the son's identification with his father—the destroyer. C. D. D.)

"I have spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was perhaps the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar<sup>1</sup> which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his *impromptus* could not be so accounted for. They must have been and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasies (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed-verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in *particular moments of the highest artificial excitement*. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was perhaps the more forcibly impressed with it as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses which were entitled *The Haunted Palace* ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:—

## I

In the greenest of our valleys,  
 By good angels tenanted,  
 Once a fair and stately palace—  
 Radiant palace—reared its head.  
 In the monarch Thought's dominion—  
 It stood there  
 Never seraph spread a pinion  
 Over fabric half so fair.

## II

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,  
 On its roof did float and flow;  
 (This—all this—was in the olden  
 Time long ago)  
 And every gentle air that dallied  
 In that sweet day,  
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,  
 A winged odour went away.

<sup>1</sup> Masturbation symbol.



## III

Wanderers in that happy valley  
 Through two luminous windows saw  
 Spirits moving musically  
 To a lute's well-tuned law,  
 Round about a throne, where sitting  
 (Porphyrogene)  
 In state his glory well befitting  
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

## IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing  
 Was a fair palace door,  
 Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing  
 And sparkling evermore,  
 A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty  
 Was but to sing,  
 In voices of surpassing beauty,  
 The wit and wisdom of their king.

## V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
 Assailed the monarch's high estate;  
 (Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow  
 Shall dawn upon him, desolate)  
*And round about his home, the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed  
 Is but a dim-remembered story  
 Of the old time entombed.*

## VI

*And travelers, now within that valley,  
 Through the red-litten windows, see  
 Vast forms that move fantastically  
 To a discordant melody;  
 While like a rapid ghastly river  
 Through the pale door  
 A hideous throng rush out for ever,  
 And laugh—but smile no more."*

The phases of the œdipus complex are well represented in this poem—verse V shows the yearning to return to the womb which results from the traumatic inhibition of the sexual instinct, whilst verse VI, by referring to the “red-litten windows” discloses the source of the discords in the soul of man and the loss of joy which results from the menstruation trauma.

The same symbolism is repeated at the end of this story and marks the fall of the House of Usher, which in itself symbolizes the loss of reason which results from incestual crime.

"One evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight (previously to its final interment) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute."

"The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that *our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere*, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light, lying at great depth immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment."

"And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more, and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterances. There were times indeed when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage."

"It was especially upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch—while the hours waned and waned away."

"An irresistible tremor gradually pervaded my frame, and *at length there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm*. Shaking this off with a gasp and

a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.”

(The foregoing description is very like what analysis has taught me are the feelings of a child when the parents are having sexual relations in the dark at night. One of the causes of the death wish against the mother as well as against the father. C. D. D.)

“I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterwards he rapped with a gentle touch at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was as usual cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained *hysteria* in his whole demeanor.”

“‘And you have not seen it?’ he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—‘you have not then seen it?—but, stay, you shall.’ Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.”

“The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was indeed a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity, for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind, and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew, careering from all points against each other without passing away into the distance.”



"I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this—yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars—nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion."

"'You must not—you shall not behold this', said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence from the window to a seat. 'These appearances which bewilder you are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon, or it may be that *they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Here is one of your favorite romances.* I will read, and you shall listen; and so we will pass away this terrible night together.'"

"The antique volume which I had taken up was the *Mad Trist* of Sir Launcelot Canning, but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in *sad jest than in earnest*; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand, and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac might find relief (*for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies*) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design."

"I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the *Trist*, *having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force.* Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:—

'And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold

parley with the hermit, who in sooth was of an obstinate and malicious turn, but feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and with blows made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarummed and reverberated throughout the forest.'

"At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment paused, for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me) that from some very remote portion of the mansion there came indistinctly to my ears what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. I continued the story:—

'But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was soon enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sat in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten:—

'Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;  
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win.'

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.'

"Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement—for there could be no doubt whatever that in this instance I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had

already conjured up for the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer. (Such a *shriek* men know and understand quite well from their *nightmares*, where the unconscious tends to become conscious—only the shriek is given by the son out of fear of the Father's attack upon him, instead of by the Dragon in his death woes. A similar nightmare occurs in relation to the feared attack of the mother with the penis in the negative oedipus complex, in which fear the name nightmare has its origin. C. D. D.)

"Oppressed, as I certainly was upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominate, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting by any observation the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question, although, assuredly, a strange alteration had during the last few minutes taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast, yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eyes as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body too was at variance with this idea—for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

'And now, the champion having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brasen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcase from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield (=mother's or sister's vagina) was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.'



"No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed at the moment fallen heavily upon the floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled, reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet, but the measured rocking movement of Usher was not undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips, and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words."

'Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am—I dared not—I *dared* not speak. *We have put her living in the tomb.* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I *dared* not speak. And now—tonight—Ethelred—ha ha—the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault. O whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? Madman' (here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul) '*Madman I tell you that she now stands without the door.*'

"As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell—the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rush-

ing gust—but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. *There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame.* For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—*then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.*"<sup>1</sup>

"From that chamber and from that mansion I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath, as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued, for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure,<sup>2</sup> of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building in a zigzag direction to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened; there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind; the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight; my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder; there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters, and the deep and dark tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the *House of Usher.*"

In the light of my previous work concerning the mother complex in the primary œdipus situation and the sister complex in the secondary aspect of the œdipus complex, I do not propose fully to interpret this story here, but would strongly recommend the careful study of this interesting tragedy, since I believe that from it psychoanalysis has something to learn, particularly since I have been obliged to leave out much relevant material from the original story owing to considerations of space.

<sup>1</sup> A return of the birth trauma *displaced* upon his sister=Madeline=Mother.

<sup>2</sup> I have twice found this menstruation-castration symbolism in precisely similar forms in patients' dreams. C. D. D.

It is true that in the House of Usher, the incest wishes, guilt, and death fears are displaced from the mother on to the sister whose death causes the repressed primary œdipus complex to break through, which is further revealed *in the story within this story*—the slaying of the dragon to obtain the mysterious and magic shield—whilst the *rape* of the sister is symbolized in her breaking out from the tomb (=the outbreak of primary œdipus complex in the son). The blood upon her white robes which is the evidence of some bitter struggle which she had passed through is the proof of the resistance which she had put up towards the incestual advances of the brother, *who dies for his sin*. The evil family physician who lurks in the background is the true God of Death, the Father—who in the story within the story is the hermit or dragon slain by the hero (=the son). The death-bringing attributes of the Father, however, as we have reiterated continually, are displaced on to woman as a result of the menstruation trauma, evidence of which exists in numerous myths, two of the most obvious examples being the Hindu mother, Goddess Durga,<sup>1</sup> and the Jewish heroine, Judith.

And finally, if still further evidence is necessary that in the mother's *bleeding vagina* is confirmation of the death-bringing attributes of the father (symbolized in his penis)—the punishment for indulging incestual desire—I would refer you to Edgar Poe's story "The Masque of the Red Death", a story which repeats in dramatic form the terror and despair occasioned in the soul of every human being at the sight and odor of his mother's menstrual bleeding, which confirm the fear of death as a punishment for the crime of incest, symbolized in the story by the "rivalry". "And now was acknowledged the presence of Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night (a common symbolism for the Father in dreams); and one by one dropped the revellers, *in the blood bedewed halls of their revel*, and died each in the despairing posture of the fall; and the life of the

<sup>1</sup> I am shortly submitting for publication psychoanalytical interpretations of the Durga Myth, and the Judith-Holofernes Fable.



*ebony clock* (=throbbing penis) went out with that of the last of the gay; *and the flames of the tripod expired; and darkness and decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all*"; which we would interpret as conveying that at the height of the primary genital phase, the incest *barrier* (=menstruation trauma) descends like a pall of death, shutting out the pre-historic past. It is with sound intuition that Laforgue selected material illustrating the menstruation complex as evidence of the incestual barrier, even though he has not directly drawn the inference of the *menstrual bleeding* as being the ontogenetic source of Baudelaire's and Edgar Poe's fixations.

In characters such as Edgar Poe and Baudelaire we detect from an analysis of their writings the fixations to the mother, with the contrasting veneration and detestation of woman which results from the menstruation complex. Such characters are unable deeply to love another woman because of the fear *that the mother will resent their disloyalty*, the guilt regarding which belongs both to the repressed incestual desire and to the cruel wishes that they entertained towards their mother, because of the mother's sexual relations with the father during the primary œdipus phase. Later, when their conscious love for the mother develops on the idealistic level of the immaculate mother, they are bound more strongly to her just because of their repressed hate and incestual passion. Intimate relations to other women call forth in them a sense of guilt and remorse, as a result of which *they displace their repressed hate of their mother's on to the NEAR OBJECTS who cause this sense of guilt*; particularly those to whom they are legally bound, for in this case the tendency is for the bond to become *increasingly irksome*. Happiness therefore to such individuals is impossible unless they feel that the marriage has the mother's sanction as well as the father's.

As in Eleonora:—

"Sleep in peace, for the spirit of love reigneth and ruleth, and, in taking to thy passionate heart her who is Ermengarde,

thou art absolved . . . of the vows of Eleonora<sup>1</sup> (=thy mother)."

It should not be overlooked in considering these tales of Edgar Poe, that he married a cousin, which is (from the psychological point of view) an incestual marriage, a fact which can have played no inconsiderable part in the poet's dramatic expression of the guilt complex in its relation to the mother.

The great importance of these stories for psychoanalysis (particularly that of "The Black Cat") is the evidence which they provide from extra-clinical sources *in support of my theories concerning the menstruation complex being the nucleus of the œdipus complex.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is one of the educational lessons which psychoanalysis has to teach, that all parents must so free themselves of their egoism and parental hate as to be able to allow their children to enter into their marital relations as free from guilt as is possible.

<sup>2</sup> At the time this paper was written the author was unaware that Marie Bonaparte was publishing a work on the life of Edgar Poe. The aim of the above paper is to show that, when the psychoanalytical inhibitions in relation to the theory of the menstruation complex are overcome, it will be discovered everywhere in literature, art, mythology, etc., by those who are willing and able to see. C. D. D.

# THREE BRIEF NOTATIONS RELATIVE TO THE CASTRATION COMPLEX

BY HENRY ALDEN BUNKER, JR. (NEW YORK)

## 1. Richard III and the Female Castration Complex

The patient was a middle-aged single woman in whom was early revealed the presence of a castration complex of rather severe degree. My purpose in this note is merely to record how in early life she found confirmation in a passage from Shakespeare of her humiliating inferiority to her brother, three years her senior, and of the low esteem in which this caused her to be held by others. It would be more accurate to say that this highly unpleasant proof was forced upon her, for it came about through her father's habit of reciting long passages of poetry aloud—a habit dating back as far as the patient can remember, so that she was unable to place the first hearing of the lines which made so deep an impression on her, the more so since her father, in his apparent partiality for them, recited them on numerous occasions. The lines are those with which *Richard III* opens, spoken by the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III:

“Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York”.

The patient, quite naturally, thought that “sun” was “son”, and that therefore the father's recital of these lines, and his fondness for them, was meant by him as a more or less veiled allusion to the place which her brother occupied not only in his esteem but as regards the fortunes of the house as well, in comparison with herself.

At the age of ten the patient read the whole play for herself—both because of the experience just described, and particularly because of the indelible impression made upon her by a picture of the blonde-haired, black velvet clad two Princes



in the Tower—her identification with whom rests on sufficiently obvious grounds.

Although not strictly relevant to the above, it is interesting to note that towards the end of this rather long opening speech Shakespeare causes Richard to describe himself in terms which every analyst has heard the subject of the female castration complex apply to herself either explicitly or by every possible implication:

“I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world scarce half made up”.

## 2. The Female Castration Complex in Greek Mythology

There is in Greek mythology a more or less unfamiliar story which seems to portray the female castration complex, not alone setting forth as it does the masochistically distorted conception of femininity and the defense against it, but describing as well in very graphic manner the narcissistic overvaluation of the penis. The story is of Kaineus, originally a girl, Kainis, and is as follows: She was raped by Poseidon and found this such a terrible experience that she asked to be turned into a man, that no such thing might ever again befall her, and, in addition, *to be made invulnerable*. This wish was granted; but thereafter Kaineus, as she now was, became noted for his impiety, for he refused to worship anything but his own spear.

## 3. The Crucifixion in a Dream

The patient, a man of forty, whose marked feminine-passive orientation and strong castration complex were the *leitmotif* of his neurosis, brought a dream in the third year of his analysis which was remarkable for the fact that it reproduced the story of the Crucifixion of Christ with such fidelity as to include even such details as the early start in the morning, the other two crosses on which the two thieves were crucified, the

women present (*Luke* xxiii, 27), and the wound in the side. The protagonist in the dream was the patient's nine-year-old son, who goes by the name of Young Junior; whereby the dream neatly condenses the son-aspect of the situation (castration, expiation, final enthronement by the side of the father) and the patient's own attitude towards his son, which, almost needless to say, was one of jealousy—was, in fact, that of Laius towards Œdipus. Although it was later evident that the patient was perfectly familiar with the story of the Crucifixion, he did not perceive that the dream was a startlingly literal transcription of it.

## IN MEMORIAM

**William Herman, M.D.**

**1891 - 1935**

The Boston Psychoanalytic Society has suffered an irreparable loss through the death of Dr. Herman. He entered the psychoanalytic field after thorough training in neurology and psychiatry and a wide experience in general psychotherapy, which was his major interest from the beginning. All those who came in contact with him were impressed by his grasp of human problems. To these he brought the intuition of the artist, supplemented by the best scientific training. With this background for his specialized work in psychoanalysis his career, had he been spared, was destined to be increasingly important.

He was one of the organizers of the Boston Society and early gave invaluable service by his part in arranging for a permanent educational program. In addition, through his position as a leader of thought among a wide circle of medical associates and through his influence on groups of medical students, he had contributed more than any one else in this community to bring psychoanalysis into favorable relationship with general medicine.

Dr. Herman was uncompromising in his standards for psychoanalysis, but he belonged among those creative and independent thinkers who in relation to an established discipline have much to contribute as well as to receive. In routine organization work he always remained the individualist, holding strong opinions which he did not hesitate to advance and uphold without regard to conformity. However, he had that type of strength which on occasion permitted him to change his mind or to admit a hasty judgment. Those who worked with him took satisfaction and comfort in the knowledge that his final position on any matter would be objectively determined to an unusual degree and would be maintained without pettiness or rancor.

Speaking for the members of this Society, I pay tribute to the memory of Dr. Herman with the hope that through his influence and example other men of his own stamp will enter and thereby enrich the ranks of psychoanalysis in Boston.

MARTIN W. PECK

*President, Boston Psychoanalytic Society*





WILLIAM HERMAN  
1891-1935



WILLIAM HERMAN was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 27, 1891. In 1925, he married Susan Evarts Hale. He died suddenly of coronary thrombosis on January 25, 1935, at the end of his forty-fourth year. He is survived by his widow, two children, his mother and his brother.

Herman graduated from Yale in 1912, tried business for a few years, then entered Harvard Medical School, and received his M.D. in 1920. After a medical internship at the Massachusetts General Hospital he studied psychiatry at the Henry Phipps Psychiatric Clinic of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, and at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. This was followed by study abroad: clinical neurology and neuro-pathology in Paris and London; and in Amsterdam, clinical neurology, comparative neuro-anatomy, and his first step towards a training in psychoanalysis.

Even before he became interested in psychological medicine, William Herman was an artist and a "Menschenkenner". These artistic and humanistic leanings led him to seek first a Jungian training. Consequently his first analytic experience was with a disciple of this school, to be amplified subsequently through contact with Jung himself. On his return to Boston in 1925 he practiced his own thoughtful version of Jungian "analytical psychology".

After five years of careful, intuitively guided efforts to test and apply these methods, William Herman supplemented them with a thorough Freudian training. This new analytical experience proved to be fruitful in every way. In his life and in his work its value was evident to everyone who knew him. To a man of great artistic appreciation, with an unusual intuitive gift in his relationship to people, was added a firm and mature grasp of technique. As a result he represented in his own person a rare combination of native gift and training. He was moving quietly towards work of increasing significance. It was characteristic that in collaboration with Dr. Stanley Cobb he should struggle several years with the difficult problems of the epilepsies without allowing himself to make any report. Only those who were close to him knew of his interesting results, and of his refusal to publish them until after five more years. It was a striking personal tribute that without the usual fanfare of publication, he should have been in a position to create a sympathetic and receptive attitude towards psychoanalysis in medical and academic circles in Boston.



To watch anyone evolve into real maturity is a moving experience. Those who had the opportunity to observe this process in William Herman enjoyed a rare privilege and a deep joy. To those of us who knew him well it is like losing a part of our own lives to see this life prematurely cut off. His death is an irreplaceable loss both to his friends, and to psychoanalytic psychiatry in this country.

LAWRENCE S. KUBIE

## BOOK REVIEWS

A STUDY OF HYPNOTICALLY INDUCED COMPLEXES BY MEANS OF THE LURIA TECHNIQUE. By P. E. Huston, D. Shakow, M. H. Erickson. *The Journal of General Psychology* XI, 1934. P. 65-97.

The recent review of Luria's book in this *QUARTERLY* (II, 1933. Pp. 330-336) makes it of interest to add a note on this beautifully controlled experimental study of the Luria method. This technique consists essentially of a study of verbal associations by means of the classical association test coupled to a simultaneous graphic registration of unintentional motions of one hand which rests on a tambour, and of the active pressure against a tambour which is maintained as steadily as possible by the other hand. In one group of Luria's original experiments the subjects were hypnotized, and in the hypnotic state were made to believe that they had taken part in some act which left them feeling anxious and guilty. This act then was completely "forgotten" in the post-hypnotic amnesia for the séance. The persisting emotional influence of the hypnotic experience was studied by means of these combined tests.

In the current investigation, the patients were studied before the hypnotic session, during hypnosis but before any hypnotic suggestions were given, under hypnosis but after the suggestion was given, again when they were out of the hypnotic state but before the suggestion had been removed, and finally after the removal of the suggested and disturbing idea. The purpose was to determine whether or not unconscious "complexes" (by which is meant here the hypnotically induced constellations of disturbing ideas) could reveal their presence by disturbances in motor coördination, studied under standard and constant conditions, in subjects in whom verbal responses alone would fail to reveal the presence of the complex.

As an outcome of these careful tests of the Luria method one is forced to conclude that the technique of motor registration adds singularly little information to that which is secured from the verbal responses alone. Thus, of nine who accepted the story told under hypnosis, three revealed the presence of a disturbing idea in their verbal responses alone and without any motor disturbances; in only one out of the whole group did motor disturbances occur alone and without simultaneous disturbances in the free associa-

tions (and this only in the waking state and not when under hypnosis). The other five gave both verbal and motor signs of the presence of the idea. As a method of detection, therefore, the motor technique seems to be a long way round to a goal to which there is a much more direct and simple verbal approach.

On the side, however, the work yielded results which are of considerable interest to analysts. There is, for instance, the case of the subject of one of the experiments who, with the totally repressed idea, induced under hypnosis, that his cigarette had burned a hole in a girl's dress, proceeded to avoid the anxiety generated by this unconscious fantasy by the compulsive ritual of giving away cigarettes. He rationalized his unconscious purpose by saying that he was thinking of giving up smoking. To produce a minute compulsion neurosis and to have an opportunity to study it *in statu nascendi* is a scientific achievement of great importance. It would be of interest to know whether under analysis this subject would prove to be a masked obsessional character.

Another point of interest is the fact that the revealing disturbances in the verbal responses to the free association test appear more freely when the patient is under hypnosis than when the patient is awake; and that conversely, where the disturbances in verbal responses are fewer, the unconscious motor manifestations tend to increase. This is an almost direct proof of the process of repression, of the persistence of the unconscious effects of the repressed, and of the fact that where verbal responses which bring the fact close to consciousness are repressed indirect motor manifestations tend to occur. It is evident that the verbal responses which are linked to the story would tend to arouse guilt, and that the repression of the verbal responses wards off these guilt feelings. The fact that the verbal responses come through more readily under hypnosis would suggest either that unconscious superego functions are reduced under hypnosis, or else that there is a persisting dissociation between the superego functions of the waking personality and the organization of the personality under hypnosis.

This point is worth stressing because it is linked to one of the most serious problems of psychoanalytic therapy. It is evident from the experiments at hand that a verbal response may reduce the need for any motor discharge for the time being; that is, it discharges the affect engendered by a disturbing word presented during the free association test. It does not, however, dislodge the



underlying complex. Thus under hypnosis, as with certain patients in analysis, an easy verbal response allows an easy discharge of feeling which, however, is only temporary. A fundamental testing of the reality of the underlying complex is not achieved, and the patient has escaped therapy rather than achieved it. This suggests that in such patients there may be a dissociation which is exactly analogous to the dissociations engendered under hypnosis.

Many other important problems are latent in this work, especially on the inter-relationships of complexes and the differences in the responses of different types of personality. These are problems on which we are prone to generalize without taking sufficient account of individual differences in psychodynamics.

In general, it may be said that these studies make better and more critical use of the technique than did its originator; and that the old word-association-test yielded more information than did the registration of the motor responses. This is work which psychoanalysts may watch with profit.

LAWRENCE S. KUBIE

RUSSIA, YOUTH AND THE PRESENT DAY WORLD: FURTHER STUDIES IN MENTAL HYGIENE. By Frankwood E. Williams. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1934. 263 p.

Made up for the most part of articles, radio talks and lectures published or delivered by the author within the last two years, supplemented and coördinated by a number of chapters prepared especially for the volume, *Russia, Youth and the Present Day World* suffers from its origin as far as unity and sequence are concerned, but profits by the repetition of the main thesis, driven home from various angles. Throughout the discussion three themes stand out in major relief. (1) An indictment of western civilization as a whole, or rather of some important principles underlying it, and as an alternative an enthusiastic endorsement of many features of the present social organization in Russia. (2) Emphasis on various aspects of mental hygiene in Russia and in other countries, especially the United States, to illustrate fundamental contrasts. (3) A vigorous and uncompromising championship of science versus religion.

Western civilization is built upon a foundation which has a fatal weakness in its cornerstone; to wit, a false concept of the nature of man. All attempts to strengthen permanently the super-

structure are doomed to failure until the cornerstone is reconstructed. This false concept in regard to man has come down unchanged from the early Greek philosophers who first gave it clear formulation. The brilliance of the thought of this early age remains unchallenged, but on account of the lack of factual knowledge about men and things, a priori concepts were necessary as premises, and deductive reasoning was used to reach conclusions. The persistence of these archaic concepts where human relations are concerned is to be contrasted with the different fate of those concepts which dealt with the inanimate world. The latter have been revamped under the influence of growing knowledge with the result of great advancement in understanding and control of the nonhuman universe. As far as the nature of man is concerned the case is otherwise, and civilization is still hopelessly tangled over the more strictly human problems by persistent attempts to reason from erroneous premises. The author illustrates the point by the example of a statesman talking over the radio. The mechanics of communication, profiting by the aid of science, now carry the voice to every corner of the world while, in sad contrast, the sentiments uttered are often the same old story quite untouched by all the developments of two thousand years.

The false concept concerning the nature of man is as follows: Man is inherently both good and bad. Hate is bad and love is good. The bad side, so far as possible, is to be denied and cast out, and the ideal toward which mankind strives is a universal brotherhood cemented by love. Few people literally believe this doctrine and still fewer act upon it, but it remains explicit in religion and implicit in the philosophy behind human relations and institutions; economic, social, sexual, educational, and political. Hate or hostility, which according to this credo is bad, as a matter of fact is as much a normal and necessary component of man's nature as is love. Therefore when denied it is not destroyed but instead is suppressed and hidden only to reappear in disguised form. In individual cruelties and violence, in war, in racial and social prejudices and so on, this disguise is thin. In modern industrial society with primitive savagery suppressed, the disguise is more successful and the main outlet for this hate or (better) aggression is in the economic exploitation of others. The disadvantages do not stop here, for economic exploitation does not simply drain off aggression in a healthy way but feeds upon itself to create more of the same as a

survival need in a highly competitive system. For those individuals whose suppressed aggression does not find substitute outlets, whether in the exploitation or salvation of others, the alternative is often a warped personality or a neurosis, the result of internal inroads of these same forces when denied access to the outer world. In any permanent social structure aggressive needs, like love needs, must be treated with respect and furnished direct expression instead of being forced into circuitous underground routes. Otherwise the result is patchwork. (All this application of the theory of the instincts sounds familiar enough to students of Freud.) Dr. Williams turns to Russia for consolation and maintains that, if one looks deep enough, it is found that the present proletarian class rule is headed toward the ultimate goal of a classless society which will do away with exploitation as an outlet for hostile and aggressive needs and furnish them a more healthy activity in combating all those forces of man and nature which oppose the new order. The economic security thus gained will banish that social anxiety which forces the mobilization of hate and aggression in the service of self-preservation, and is the basis of so many social and personal ills.

In the field of mental hygiene Dr. Williams can easily qualify as an expert. Here as elsewhere he finds much in favor of Russia in comparison with western Europe and America. In Russia he finds that the interest and emphasis of psychiatry is on social rather than individual psychopathology. Problems of nervous and mental disorders, delinquency, alcoholism, and so on, are approached from the standpoint of their social etiology. So to speak, the attack is concentrated at the roots rather than spread out in scattered efforts to deal with difficulties in the separate twigs and branches of the full grown tree. According to the author, substantial results have already been achieved. In spite of deprivation of luxuries and even necessities, the new economy gives to the individual Russian a sense of personal security and has done much to banish that universal anxiety which lurks in the background for every member of a competitive industrial state. The real social equality of women with men, the freedom for relationships between the sexes, with opportunity for early marriage and easy divorce, have banished the evils of sexual repression as far as those are adult and social phenomena. The group management of children in nursery and early school life diminishes the danger of disturbing emotional



entanglements in the family. The aggressive needs, as stated, find a mentally healthy outlet in opposing all forces which hinder the new order. The statistical result on apparently good authority—based on the number of hospital beds in certain industrial communities, clinical material for teaching and so on—has been a marked reduction in nervous and mental disorders. In addition, unexpectedly rapid progress has taken place in such problems as the control of drunkenness, prostitution, and other delinquencies. That these findings must apply in this transitional period only to certain groups and sections goes without saying. For example, the effect on the mental hygiene of the aristocracy can by no means be considered favorable. However, Dr. Williams stoutly maintains that the sample experiments already performed give sufficient proof of the ultimate application to the people as a whole.

In the matter of science versus religion Dr. Williams gives no quarter and asks none, and the strong affectivity shown throughout his book is at its maximum on this subject. He is generous enough, however, to include a chapter (No. V) in rebuttal, written by Rabbi Lazaron, a progressive churchman whose words are the more significant because he acknowledges the validity of much that Dr. Williams has to say. These gentlemen are worthy opponents and both make a good showing. From the standpoint of the psychiatrist Dr. Williams delivers one original offensive. He makes an application of social psychiatry in expounding the doctrine that when the modern world gave up the concept of the Devil, at that moment the foundation under the concept of God began to give way. An enlightened society no longer looks upon "badness" as the work of the Archfiend, and is increasingly reluctant to take bad actions at their face value in matters of delinquency and so on. It is considered proper to study the bad man with the aid of psychological science from the standpoint of motive and background. By the same token, says Dr. Williams, science has the right and duty to study the good in man, hitherto sacrosanct to this approach, and when so studied goodness will like badness be found a product of understandable social and psychological forces rather than an expression of the spirit of God.

On the whole the book is of such excellent quality that a sympathetic reviewer is reluctant to emphasize its defects although they are certain to interfere seriously with its influence and importance. These defects are in general those of enthusiasms and extravagances,



and are the more regrettable in that they furnish ammunition to the enemy by giving reason for the timid or the hostile reader to repudiate the whole work offhand. Describing this book in three words, it is courageous, penetrating and reckless. It is courageous not only in its wide-flung challenge to entrenched conservatism all along the line, but also in throwing into the discard much of that structure of accomplishment toward which the author's life work and that of his colleagues have been directed. It is penetrating in that Dr. Williams does not remain on the usual level of sociological discussions but plunges straight through to fundamentals. It is reckless in certain excesses and a lack of tolerance, plus sweeping generalizations with reference to which the reader searches in vain for supportive data.

For such able and creative thinking as is set forth in these pages, Dr. Williams has special qualifications through mental endowment and experience. He has an actively receptive mind, and the seasoning of maturity has not destroyed the eagerness of youth. He has also avoided the customary psychic rigidities which tend to crystallize the viewpoints of those who have arrived at success in their chosen field. In his long service with The National Committee for Mental Hygiene he has been in the forefront of all movements for social progress. In recent years he has made repeated and extended visits to Russia where he enjoys acquaintance with representative men of the new regime. In addition he has made comparative observations in other European countries. However, in his searching criticism of the existing order, he has not avoided falling repeatedly into the pits which he has dug for others. In particular this applies to reasoning from poorly established premises and to alternating denial and acceptance of ideals and "illusions" as guides for thought and action.

It appears to the reviewer that although Dr. Williams in these studies has seen straight and seen far, he has used in the process two pairs of spectacles. Those for the existing order are made of dark glass, while in contrast Russia is viewed through lenses of rosy hue. A minor detail will illustrate the point. In the crowded street cars of Russian cities Dr. Williams noted no offensive human odors. These observations in a land where so many lusty bodies are denied the benefits of soap is in striking opposition to those of other observers. Such an olfactory anæsthesia suggests the probability of further dissociation at levels of cerebration higher than mere

sensory perception. However, in final summing up the strength in this collection of papers far outweighs the weakness. No one can doubt the earnestness and sincerity of the writer and no open-minded reader can remain unmoved by his arguments and his plea.

MARTIN W. PECK (BOSTON)

THE QUEST FOR CORVO. By A. J. A. Symons. New York: Macmillan Company, 1934. 293 p.

This recent biography is a brilliant and engrossing study of a little known writer of the early years of the twentieth century—an eccentric, gifted, versatile man whose psychopathic personality wrecked his career and life. It is not often that a biography presents the interesting psychological aspects given to us by Mr. Symons in this life of Frederick Rolfe,—self-styled Baron Corvo.

Born in 1860 of middle-class English parents, the oldest of five brothers, Frederick is described from the first as being “gifted and flighty”. Against his father’s desires he left school at fifteen, studied in a desultory fashion at Oxford, became a schoolmaster and shortly after joined the Catholic Church—a great blow to his father, a firm Dissenter. Following this he became a candidate for the priesthood. His strivings in this direction were soon permanently quenched, as he was discharged from the seminary on the basis of “no vocation”,—a decision which produced a deep psychological trauma from which he never recovered and which gave a firm basis in reality for his later paranoid trends. After leaving the seminary he showed great industry in developing his unusual and varied talents, wrote a number of excellent books, painted with distinction and had a wide variety of minor aptitudes. There can be no doubt but that he had unusual artistic ability.

As early as we have any information about him he had already established an emotional pattern of life, the intensity of which steadily increased until at the end it made him a penniless, friendless outcast. This pattern consisted of the development of a passionate friendship with a man, characterized by intense demands and great vacillations in mood, and by quarrels and reconciliations which would follow one on the other. As these increased in intensity his own sense of deep and, to him, unjustified injury, grew until the relationship was broken forever. The kinder the friend had been to him—and many were kind and forbearing indeed—the more irreparable the break and the more keen his sense of injury.

His attitude toward his friends was always that of a coquettish and petulant woman. In the beginning he would stress his own difficulties, his helplessness, his need for love, understanding and protection. He then would become more and more demanding of time and attention and money; would feel that his friend should support him, or give him most of the credit for collaboration on a book, and love him to the exclusion of the rest of the world. When he forced the friend, in self-protection, to leave him, he felt that he had been abominably tricked and injured and spent much time writing letters complaining of his situation to mutual acquaintances.

Painting appeared to interest him before he took up writing seriously. It was invariably ecclesiastical and ornate; Mr. Symons reports it as being well above the grade of work produced by the average artist. The one example reproduced in the biography is psychologically interesting in that it consists of repetitions of winged figures with pointed swords and spears, the entire picture being pierced by sharp shafts of light.

For us, his really illuminating artistic expression is his writing. He wrote a precious, beautiful and involved style, embroidered with words glittering like jewels, belonging to the feminine cult of the early twentieth century English writers among whom Oscar Wilde and Ronald Firbank are his better known contemporaries. Some of his books were never published—most are at present out of print. Some are fantastic Renaissance romances, others tales of Italy—a history of the House of Borgia and a scandalous account of the Venetian society of his day. Mr. Symons, who has read all of them (some in manuscript), states that throughout his style and plots are astounding. The reviewer has been able to secure *Hadrian the Seventh* which both artistically and psychologically appears to be the most interesting of his books. As was immediately recognized by his friends when it was published in 1904, it is autobiographical and the characters throughout are his former friends and enemies. The hero, George Rose, after being dismissed from a Catholic theological seminary and going through many hardships, as did the author, is reinstated in the church with great acclaim, and due to a split in the College of Cardinals is shortly after made Pope. Through his great wisdom, strength and sincerity he is able to rule, not only the Catholic Church but the entire temporal world as well. Never had there been such a Pope! The scenes in which he triumphs over his former enemies and his



humiliation of them and later magnanimity toward them are magnificently described. The end of the novel is of particular significance. His enemies, the socialists, abetted by a woman whose advances he had scorned, spread scandalous rumors about him and in the end assassinate him. The entire book is written with great power and emotion.

Certainly Rolfe's psychological mechanisms are extremely interesting and unusual in their expression. His frankly paranoid trends which followed directly on his very slightly disguised love affairs with his men friends and his contempt and disgust for women freely expressed in his books and letters reveal clearly his love for and fear of men. It is impossible to determine whether he had any overt homosexual relationships with adult men at any time in his life, as Mr. Symons is very reticent about his sexual activities. However, at the end of his life his homosexuality did break through. Letters written at that time from Venice indicate without doubt that he seduced young boys and also acted as a procurer for other men, offering to secure young boys for them and describing in glowing terms the pleasures involved. The combination of actual perversion, psychotic trends and artistic expression in handling his psychological conflicts make Rolfe's life of great interest to the student of psychology.

It is unfortunate that we know so little of his family life. No mention is made of his mother and aside from his early repudiation of the life and religion of his parents we know nothing of his history prior to the age of fifteen. However, from adolescence on his marked passive homosexuality was evidenced by his deeply emotional friendship with men, his open dislike of women and his paranoid defense reactions. We may assume, too, that his apparently aggressive relationships with boys as he grew older were only a screen for his own passivity—as he himself reveals by his vivid descriptions to another man of the sexual delights involved, as if to say: "I am doing to a little boy what I would like you to do to me". The portrayal of his homosexual desires and fears in *Hadrian the Seventh* is of particular interest. In order to disguise his passivity and his desire to be dominated by other men, he makes himself Lord of the World, at the same time expressing his return to an infantile omnipotent stage. Even here he protects himself from danger by being an asexual figure although this device does not in the end save the hero from his passive fate, for he dies



of the anal rape (shooting) which the author desired and feared all his life. We are warranted in concluding from the material at hand that Frederick Rolfe belonged to the second type of male homosexual described by Freud—i.e., the man who wishes to be treated by his father as his father treated his mother. That this treatment was considered to be sadistic and to result in castration and death is evidenced by his own fears and defenses—by the Pope's gunshot death in his novel-autobiography and by his own assaults on young boys (whether the latter were anal we do not know).

The particular point of psychological interest in this man's history is the outlet for expression of unconscious conflicts which his writing afforded him. Here we see in the form of artistic expression the very trends which in another individual might have taken the psychotic form of an actual regression to an omnipotent, narcissistic state, expressing itself in the delusion that he was in actuality an all-powerful Pope. In life he did assume the unwarranted title of Baron Corvo, in order to increase his prestige, but there is no evidence that he believed himself to belong to the nobility.

The unique method of Symons' biography of Rolfe adds to the interest of its subject matter. He shows the development of Corvo's life as he himself obtained knowledge of the various periods until at last when he has assembled all his data we have a startlingly clear picture of a brilliant and unique character. It is regrettable that Mr. Symons' puritanism or discretion makes him so reticent about the later sexual episodes. However, this is a minor criticism of a biography which is fascinating both in form and content.

SUSANNA S. HAIGH (NEW YORK)

COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY. Edited by F. A. Moss. New York: Prentice Hall, 1934. 520 p.

Unlike most texts that are the work of a number of contributors, this volume by twelve representative American psychologists has an unusual consistency of approach. It is a thorough survey of the animal field from the behaviorist and experimental point of view, well documented and for the most part well written. Particularly outstanding are the chapters on Theories of Learning (by E. C. Tolman) and The Conditioned Reflex (by H. S. Lidell); the latter is the most succinct and generally most accurate exposition of the subject that the reviewer has as yet come across. The content

of the other contributions is largely concerned with the data and results of animal experimentation, and accordingly a large part of the material presented relates to the learning functions. C. P. Stone, it is true, contributes two chapters on Instinct and Motivation, but though excellent as far as they go, they hardly touch upon material available from investigations other than those of the pure experimentalist, and this is equally true of the articles by most of the other contributors. The reader brought up on Romanes, Darwin and even Lloyd Morgan will find little of the type of fact made familiar by these older writers. In the present volume, as in most recent texts on animal psychology, the descriptive aspects of animal behavior receive scant attention. This, of course, reduces the possibilities of what has been termed the anthropomorphic bias, and by virtue of this neglect, cedes many of the advantages which direct descriptive observation affords for the broader and significant interpretations of the general aspects of animal behavior. Thus, there is little about the courtship and mating habits (or instincts) of animals, less about pugnacity, and no mention at all of the so-called death-feigning instinct. On the whole, the psychoanalyst will find less suggestive material in this book than in those of the older writers. As an introductory text to the general field of comparative (animal) psychology, however, it meets a very real need.

DAVID WECHSLER (NEW YORK)

**SWEEPING THE COBWEBS.** By Lillien J. Martin and Clare de Gruchy.  
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933. viii+181 p.

This book—enthusiastically and even romantically written, yet with all possible modesty as well—is an account of an enterprise which is, as far as I know, unique: the treatment of personality defects and emotional problems in the aged—that is, to judge from the case material cited, in those past (in most instances) the age of sixty. For the purpose of carrying out what would seem to many a highly thankless task, that of helping their patients (“consultants”) to adjust to their present situation at a time of life when such adjustability has often diminished almost to the vanishing point, the authors have established in San Francisco what they call the Old Age Center, the primary object of which is, to use the authors’ expression, the salvaging of old age. In this work a major interest becomes the removal of individuals from the ranks of those

economically dependent and in particular the rescue of those who are on the point of joining these ranks; and they have been successful, for example, in convincing the employer, with a considerable number of whom they have established contact, that many a worker considered to have become unemployable can be restored to much of his or her former usefulness when its loss is due to emotional difficulties arising on the basis of advancing years. Without going into further details, without commenting for example on the many brief but excellently presented case histories included, it will be enough to add that the book—a sequel to *Salvaging Old Age*, published in 1930—is addressed not alone to the public at large but in particular to employers and employment managers and to social workers, of which latter group the authors, by the way, have this to say: “As a class, social workers do not strike one as being sufficiently acquainted with their own peculiarities and weaknesses to understand with needed thoroughness those of their cases”! (But of course this is in San Francisco.) The authors are to be congratulated upon the courage and enthusiasm with which, while free from all illusions, they have undertaken and are carrying out a useful and very difficult work.

H. A. B.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN: ITS CAUSE AND CURE. By W. Beran Wolfe, M.D. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1933. xv+240 p.

The daily experience of the psychoanalyst is rather far from being such as to create in him any particular bias in favor of even the best examples of that type of book which purports to expound for the benefit of the layman the subject of “nervous breakdown, its cause and cure”. For the analyst is cognizant of reasons quite additional to those which weigh against volumes encouraging the self-diagnosis and self-treatment of diabetes, for example—reasons which make a work of the sort here under review particularly and inevitably futile and even pernicious. In any case, as long as an apparently insatiable demand on the part of the public exists for such books, it might indeed be well if they were of a distinctly higher quality than is Dr. Wolfe’s opus. To give extended space to its demerits and defects is needless. Those who might be interested in large-scale denigration may refer to an extended review, at the same time entirely fair and fully merited, which appeared in the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* about a year ago.

Here it is sufficient to remark that a certain undercurrent of insincerity, not to say self-advertising, not to say exhibitionism, runs somehow throughout the book, from the preface (in which it is promised, for example, that the final chapters will be found *packed with practical suggestions*), through the pretentiousness of the very chapter headings ("Of Causes", "Of Symptoms", "Of Cases and Cures", "Of Creative Self-Realization", etc.), to the *Thus Spake Zarathustra* tone of his concluding sentence: "I give you courage, hope, and the will to get well!"

H. A. B.

Out of respect for Dr. Jelliffe, but without creating a precedent, the QUARTERLY is hereby publishing the author's comments on the review of his monograph—*The Psychopathology of Forced Movements and the Oculogyric Crises of Lethargic Encephalitis*, Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series, No. 55, 1932, which appeared in this QUARTERLY II, 1933, pp. 622-26.

THE EDITORS

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF THE OCULOGYRIC CRISES  
AND ITS FUNERAL BY DR. LAWRENCE S. KUBIE

BY SMITH ELY JELLIFFE (NEW YORK)

Polemics are not much in my line. Being a firm believer in Bacon's oft-quoted line—"Truth is the daughter of Time and not of Authority"—I have been content for the most part to cast my thought children (original and/or adopted) out into the world and let them shift for themselves (vide *Priority and Progress—J. Philos.* XIV, 393, 1917). Some of them, however, have been close to my affections and since a recent one has been met with much depreciation and no praise, I would here defend it.

The more precise wording of Dr. Kubie's deprecatory summary is "much to deplore and little to commend". Since the review in question seems to deal exclusively with the deploring and does not even mention the "little to commend", I advance to the support of that "little", thus neglecting, for the moment, the show of that equanimity of spirit which should derive from the Baconian phrase first quoted.

Perhaps the most rigorous manner to dissect a review is to dissect it, hence its more or less complete reprinting and my comments.

"An honest review of this monograph", writes Dr. Kubie, "must be unsparing, even if it leads to sharp criticism of one who has always battled wittily and often effectively to win respect for dynamic psychology. In a sense it may be looked upon as a tribute to a large and generous and adventurous spirit that the author's original contributions have been subjected so often to vigorous



and justifiable attack, even at the hands of friends and coworkers who hold his spirit in high and affectionate regard."

This sugaring of the grapefruit should certainly appease any would-be "Caesar" did not that "not that I loved Caesar less but Rome more" prototype chablon stand out as the mark of the "honorable man" of Anthony's rejoinder.

"To this reviewer the present volume contains much to deplore and little to commend. It *seems*<sup>1</sup> to embody the author's most serious faults of style, of methodology, and of reasoning. This is all the more regrettable, since there can hardly be a problem more searching in its psychiatric implications than the question which is raised by the occurrence of obsessional thoughts in association with oculogyric crises in cases of chronic encephalitis (post-encephalitis)."

Thus my child is brought to the bar on the matter of *style*, of *method* (of delivery) and of its *reasoning*—i.e., I presume, the logic of the argumentation. Apparently we, the reviewer and myself, agree as to the significance and importance to psychiatry concerning the great opportunity offered by the study of the oculogyric crises, especially as to a relation between such bits of behavior and possible psychological causative and/or additive factors. The reviewer only mentions the "obsessive thoughts". The title of the book would seem to limit the study to "forced movements". Since "thoughts" and "movements" are so closely allied we will pass over this initial misstatement of the reviewer.

To continue with the criticism: "Stylistically one must quarrel with the author's choice and use of words, and with his sentence structure, *almost line by line*, from first to last." "*De gustibus non est disputandum*" has long been a comment re matters of style. Dr. Kubie does not care for my style, my choice of words, my sentence formation. He picks out one "clumsy and complex paragraph" as the fourth paragraph of the first page. Let us see if it is as bad as Dr. Kubie says it is. I reprint it here. "Closely following or attendant upon, and possibly most intimately related to the vast explosion of racial antipathies conditioned by the aggressive reach for possessions, called the World War, there occurred a vast epidemic extension of a disease process, which, first called Lethargic Encephalitis by v. Economo of Vienna and adequately described, so far as certain localized processes were concerned, has through the research of thousands of students come to be designated under the general title of Epidemic Encephalitis." That Dr. Kubie did not really understand the need for these different words, "following", or "attendant upon", or "most intimately related to" is conceivable. Each one has a great number of studies behind it. Incidentally apparently this was the only sentence he saw in this to me very informing Introduction.

But to go on: "Such avoidable repetition of words as occurs in lines 7 and 8 of page 7." "In 1921 Oeckinhaus related the earliest case here found directly related to encephalitis." Surely a heinous crime.

"The combative conversational manner of colloquial, semi-obscene or facetious slang expressions" is thus lampooned [paragraph 3 on page 6]. I do not reprint paragraph 3 on page 6, since Dr. Kubie made a mistake and meant paragraph 2 on page 6. This is the offending paragraph: "Epidemiological

<sup>1</sup> *Italics mine.*

problems are not the purpose of this note. The ocular symptoms recorded during various 'influenza' (?) epidemics, neither; but emphasis is emphatic—they did occur! are recorded! of the nature of those now under discussion, and that's that without more ado!"

In fairness to an author, commenting on his style, does this paragraph deserve to be called "combative, colloquial, semi-obscene or facetiously slangy"?

"Science does not profit from such congeries of words as 'phyletically agglutinated configurations' (page 158)." This is our prophet's next pronouncement. Not being quite so sure myself how science may or may not profit I submit that this "congeries of words" is perfectly good sense. Everyone knows that structures become agglutinated, i.e., become added to in the course of racial evolution (phyletic) and that within these racially additive structuralizations certain configurations, "Gestalten", or "patterns" become preserved. If Dr. Kubie simply said he personally did not like this three word pattern it would not disturb me. I do.

The review then goes on to say that "*more* than one-half of this monograph is devoted to the listing of two hundred cases". One hundred on the 224 pages (3 of Index) is a little *less* than half—but we are told—"With a few exceptions, so little data is given in the brief abstract of each case, that the list is of value only as a guide into the literature". Now here surely "Brutus is an honorable man". Dr. Kubie has not read the original case histories. He does not know that there was so little "psychopathological material" that could be obtained from any of them that of necessity the abstracts would be brief because of such absence of the material with which the monograph deals. I submit that so far as the subject matter of this monograph is concerned that the judgment "that the list is of value as a guide to the literature" is uninformed and stupid even though the reviewer says lightly—"Dr. Jelliffe comments rightly on the inadequacy of the studies on the psychological content of these cases". If I am right about this inadequacy, why abstract those "inadequate" reports more at length? "It is a keen disappointment", we are then told, "therefore to find that of his four original cases, only one has been subjected to any kind of psychoanalysis, and that no one of them is presented carefully enough or fully enough to clarify the problems involved."

I share with Dr. Kubie in his "disappointment". Were I to present the complete analyses of any one of these cases no publisher would print them and if printed no one would read them, they are so voluminous. As to whether the problems are "carefully or fully enough" presented for the purpose of the argument, that is a matter for each reader to decide and not for a reviewer to be dogmatic about. If the reader's own background be sufficient, it may be fully enough. Furthermore there is excellent evidence that Dr. Kubie has not even read the monograph that he so gallantly criticizes apropos of this very point of the inadequacy of the case material. Throughout the personal case histories which are "not exhaustive enough" there are specific references to a large number of details which have been published in different journals in the past four or five years. Had all of these been simply reprinted instead of referred to by citation, as stated, the monograph would be too large and cumbersome and the argument labored by excessive repetition. Thus may it

not be questioned how "honest" is this review that our Brutus is so anxious to eulogize.

Dr. Kubie then goes on to tell the reader quite gratuitously just what were the problems that he thinks I set out to discuss. I am glad to see them set down so neatly and dogmatically. I recognize some of them. Had the answers been as clear to me as they would seem to be to Dr. Kubie—on what grounds I am entirely in the dark—I would have been delighted to answer.

Thus "(1) Why are the oculogyric crises sometimes attended by acute anxiety, and at other times not?" My own few cases always were—but the data offered in the 200 case histories abstracted left me unable to guess how many were, hence this question is not answered by me.

"(2) Why are some of the crises attended by pain, and others not?" Same reply. Maybe they would be if severe enough. Surely this is an academic query.

"(3) Why are some of the crises attended by an eruption of obsessional ideas, and others not?" Here again the same answer. The data of the observations so briefly abstracted are too slight to permit formulations. My own cases all had obsessional eruptive thoughts. This could have been seen if the case histories had been so 'honestly' read.

"(4) To what extent are these variable psychological concomitants dependent upon the pre-encephalitic personality, or to what extent are they dependent upon changes in the personality which are induced by the encephalitic process?" This question, if it means anything at all, is a good deal to ask of any author not writing a monograph on this particular subject. Especially when dealing with cited cases in none of which is the thought even broached. I cannot see the relevancy of the question save as a bit of cubistic exhibitionism.

"(5) To what extent are the oculogyric crises themselves due to specific, localized, organic irritation? Or do they represent a distorted expression of the pressure of instinctual forces operating through a mutilated central nervous system?"

It is stated several times in my monograph that I am not writing about the possibilities of "specific, localized, organic irritations". Apart from my general scepticism re the influence of "irritations", (i.e., the *causation* of negative symptoms in Hughlings Jackson's sense), the monograph is devoted exclusively to the consideration of the second situation of Dr. Kubie's (5) namely, *what* comes through the mutilated machine—more particularly not *how* it comes through—i.e., escapes repression, but what is the possible significance of that which does come through?

And finally Dr. Kubie, again gratuitously, assumes the "essence of the problem": "(6) The relationship of compulsive phenomena to tics, and the question of whether there are two kinds of tics—one essentially organic, and the other essentially psychogenetic in origin".

This was *not* the problem although the tic problem is touched upon in my monograph. Obviously in a monograph in which definite "negative" "organic" processes show (Hughlings Jackson) one could hardly hope to enter into the large problem of all of the tics. Dr. Kubie seems to have missed entirely my references concerning the significance of "negative" and "positive" symptoms as formulated by Hughlings Jackson. While it may be granted that I have not



answered these questions in as dogmatic a form as Dr. Kubie might have wished—which is impossible—any careful reader will note that, for me at least, they still are questions to be asked and not answers to be given. I shall await Dr. Kubie's "clear cut answers" to these problems. He undoubtedly must have them since I "content myself with commenting on the complexities of the issues involved". "Upon what meat" Dr. Kubie feeds I do not know, but I do know that neither he nor anyone else at the present time can be dogmatic about the things I "shy away from".

Dr. Kubie (p. 624, citing my pages 178–179 in support) accuses me of "unfairness" regarding "localizations" by the many authors who have found so many localizations; and that I "object to the legitimate efforts at anatomical localization". This is either a deliberate or a stupid misrepresentation of my position. I ask, "Thus cannot one put aside, *for the time at least*, 'nosologies'"—and then I note how different investigators have claimed different localizations for the "negative" signs, quoting some half dozen of the thirty or forty localization hypotheses in the literature. They cannot all be true. This is a point here stressed, since the whole monograph deals with the "positive" release phenomena made easier by the "negative" destructive lesions—often probably far more extensive than just in the eye-movement mechanisms. On page 179 I say distinctly—"as is readily agreed, may be bound up in some manner with various types of defect in the human machine". As some of my studies on encephalitis referred to in this monograph deal specifically with the "organic defects", the allusion to my neglect of them is entirely unwarranted and false.

Thus on page 182 I write as follows: "It also seems desirable at the outset to state, and with *emphasis*, that one can have no quarrel with those who elect to study electronic modifications, ionic milieu adjustments (Zondek—Kraus—*Syziologie der Person*), pathological processes in the liver (Wilson), in the colon (Cotton), the teeth and sinuses or in other places; or with those who would study pathological processes in the spinal cord, the medulla; or the diencephalon (Greving), striatal or cortical pathology (Josephy, Spielmeyer, Fünfgeld, Zingerle, Vogt *et al.*). Such study is more than welcome, but, in the language of the Whitehead quotation, all of the subsidiary organisms are operating in accordance with the "mental state" or with the Socratic "soul". What is most fundamental is—What are the impulses of the unconscious (the 'Id' of Freud) doing to get around the difficulties, to function adaptively as a whole in spite of the structural insult, no matter what its nature or localization may be?

If this is any "objection to legitimate efforts at anatomical localization" as Dr. Kubie puts it, I fail to see it.

These organic defects may influence some of the "form"—but can tell us nothing of the "content" of the material which the monograph studies.

Dr. Kubie's next comment (p. 624) re my reasoning re pathogenesis is quite incomprehensible to me. He says he differs!—from what? What he seems to think I mean is quite foreign to anything I recognize. No wonder he differs. As to his belief in the validity of Stern's *Drangshandlungen* versus *Zwangshandlungen* well and good! Having talked with and written to Stern himself about it I fail to follow Dr. Kubie.



I trust that should he ponder again (p. 183)—as to certain not “distinctions”, but “emergents” from psychic to organic, he will be less “bemused” and find them less “incomprehensible”. Nowhere in the book can Dr. Kubie find a dualistic “body-mind” antithesis. He puts it there. I do not.

On the whole I am not over clear myself as to how “life insinuated itself into dead matter” as Bergson so neatly says it, nor am I sufficiently won over by Jeans, Eddington and the newer physicists as to the “psychical” reality behind all “matter”, so I shall not insist that Dr. Kubie should not be “bemused” and find some of my statements “incomprehensible”. I may change them myself tomorrow.

Dr. Kubie makes further adverse comment on my suggestion that the “ego” functions have general localization areas in the cortex and that the encephalitic process may involve the cortex—not specifically designated as Brodman area this or von Economo area that. He also seems to object to the conception that there thus ensues an interference with the ego repressing function and that instinctual forces the more readily gain entrance to the kind of motor discharge which is dealt with in the monograph. But they are still held up—i.e., subject to superego repression and hence show as specific ritualistic distortions.

I had thought that it was held by all psychoanalysts that the ego function was practically nil in infancy, also in grown up infants, such as idiots or imbeciles, etc., and that further the lack of cortical structuralization was the most striking event in such failures to develop the “ego” functions, especially the verbalizing aspects of the ego function. Hence I do not understand Dr. Kubie's objection to my reference to cortical destruction as related to loss of ego repression function.

I did not enter at all fully into the other possibility he finds fault with, namely differences in possible localization of superego function and ego function. This, however, is a fruitful field for research since so much has turned up in encephalitis and other types of diencephalic involvement (see Cannon, Bard, et al.) in relation to primitive emotional dissociations. Even many lower animals are known to have “aversions and disgusts” which are among the earliest of the “superego” repression mechanisms in the infant—at least so I read Freud. Hence I find Dr. Kubie's comments quite captious. He says I confuse the “id” with Whitehead's “mental states”. This is absurd as anyone may see who reads my discussion here (pp. 160–162) of Head's conceptions and why Head did not carry his very fruitful idea, *re vigilance*, beyond a purely mechanistic dogma *re reflex action*. That a certain, perhaps unwarranted, eclecticism in the use of explanatory conceptions is here utilized I readily assent to, and that Dr. Kubie may find what he is polite enough to call “minor errors” in psychoanalytic formulation I also agree with. In a body of formulations so rapidly advancing, as in psychoanalysis, who is not to be found out in “minor errors”?

Finally Dr. Kubie sums up his dry vermouth in expressing his disappointment that there is “no adequate analysis of the obsessive thoughts which in certain cases erupt in association with oculogyric crises”. I share with him his disappointment. The monograph, however, dealt with the psychopathology of the “movements” of the oculogyric crises. Some day it may be my privilege

to discuss the "obsessive thoughts" in which case I shall hope that I shall have advanced sufficiently in my knowledge of psychoanalysis as to meet with Dr. Kubie's approval. In the meantime, notwithstanding the many inadequacies of my monograph on the oculogyric crises, its faulty style—seen in "every line"—I raise a still small voice and believe it a far better production than my reviewer would present it.

#### REPLY TO DR. JELLIFFE

The reviewer does not feel that a line by line defense of his original criticism of Dr. Jelliffe's book could possibly be of general interest. For his own part, he must reaffirm his conviction that the monograph on Oculogyric Crises is inadequate, both from the neurological and from the psychoanalytic points of view. After restudying the monograph, and rereading some of the other publications of the author to which he refers in his rebuttal, the reviewer finds himself unable to make any essential amelioration of his initial criticisms.

One can only admire the resilient spirit of Dr. Jelliffe's reply, but at the same time one regrets both the author's refusal to believe in the sincerity of the personal tribute with which the review opened and the personal tone of the counter-attack. It is fair to demand from such a monograph a clear formulation of the problems, and a clear indication of the methodological approaches to their solution. In the review itself was pointed out what Dr. Jelliffe emphasizes in his reply, namely, that it is premature to demand the answers to these problems. Therefore it was not for this that the monograph was criticized, but rather for making the questions less clear and the methods more obscure. These fundamental criticisms still seem to the reviewer to be sound.

LAWRENCE S. KUBIE (NEW YORK)

# CURRENT PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERATURE

## The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis. Vol. XV, Part 4, October, 1934.

- GÉZA RÓHEIM: The Evolution of Culture.  
 RENÉ LAFORGUE: Resistances at the Conclusion of Analytic Treatment.  
 HELEN SHEEHAN-DARE: On Making Contact with the Child Patient.  
 THERESE BENEDEK: Some Factors Determining Fixation at the "Deutero-Phallic Phase".  
 H. WILFRID EDDISON: The Love-Object in Mania.

## Vol. XVI, Part 1, January, 1935.

- BARBARA LOW: The Psychological Compensations of the Analyst.  
 FELIX BOEHM: Anthropology: Its Forms and Motives.  
 MELITTA SCHMIDBERG: The Psycho-Analysis of Asocial Children.  
 KIYOYASU MARUI: The Process of Introjection in Melancholia.  
 EDOARDO WEISS: Agoraphobia and Its Relation to Hysterical Attacks and Traumas.  
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## Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse. Vol. XX, Number 4, 1934.

- EDOARDO WEISS: Die Strassenangst und ihre Beziehung zum hysterischen Anfall und zum Trauma (*Agoraphobia and its Relation to Hysterical Seizure and to Trauma*).  
 HEINRICH MENG: Das Problem der Organpsychose. Zur seelischen Behandlung organisch Kranker (*The Problem of Organ Psychosis. On the Psychologic Treatment of Patients Suffering from Organic Disease*).  
 EDUARD HITSCHMANN: Beiträge zu einer Psychopathologie des Traumes (*Contributions to a Psychopathology of Dreams*).  
 OTTO FENICHEL: Über Angstabwehr, insbesondere durch Libidinisierung (*On Defense against Anxiety, Especially by Means of Libidinization*).  
 HELLMUTH KAISER: Probleme der Technik (*Problems of Technique*).  
 BARBARA LOW: Die psychischen Entschädigungen des Analytikers (*The Psychic Compensations of the Analyst*).  
 EMIL SIMONSON: Erfolgreiche Behandlung einer schweren, multiplen Konversionshysterie durch Katharsis (*Successful Treatment of a Severe, Multiple Conversion-Hysteria through Catharsis*).  
 YRJÖ KUOVESI: Ein Beitrag zur Psychoanalyse des epileptischen Anfalls (*A Contribution to the Psychoanalysis of the Epileptic Seizure*).  
 LUDWIG EIDELBERG: Zur Erniedrigung des Liebesobjekts (*The Degradation of the Love Object*).

## Imago. Vol. XX, Number 4, 1934.

- ALFRED WINTERSTEIN: Echtheit und Unechtheit im Seelenleben (*The Genuine and the Spurious in the Psyche*).  
 LUDWIG JEKELS-  
 EDMUND BERGLER: Triebdualismus im Traum (*Instinctual Dualism in Dreams*).  
 FRITZ WITTELS: Der psychologische Inhalt von Männlich und Weiblich (*The Psychologic Content of Masculine and Feminine*).



- OSKAR PFISTER: Neutestamentliche Seelsorge und psychoanalytische Therapie (*The Care of the Soul in the New Testament and Psychoanalytic Therapy*).
- HELENE DEUTSCH: Don Quijote und Donquijotismus (*Don Quixote and Quixotism*).
- ERNST KRIS: Zur Psychologie der Karikatur (*The Psychology of Caricature*).
- HANNS SACHS: Edgar Poe.

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- SIGM. FREUD: Der Familienroman der Neurotiker (*The Family Romance of Neurotics*).
- HANS ZULLIGER: Pädagogen erliegen dem Fluche der Lächerlichkeit (*Teachers are Accursed by Ridicule*).
- IMRE HERMANN: Über den Gehorsam (*On Obedience*).
- M. WULFF: Phantasie und Wirklichkeit im Seelenleben des Kleinkindes (*Fantasy and Reality in the Psychic Life of Infants*).
- FRITZ REDL: Gedanken über die Wirkung einer Phimoseoperation (*Reflections on the Effects of an Operation for Phimosis*).

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- MELITTA SCHMIEDEBERG: Zur psychoanalytischen Behandlung asozialer Kinder und Jugendlicher (*The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Asocial Children and Young People*).
- MICHAEL BÁLINT: Der Onanie-Abgewöhnungskampf in der Pubertät (*Masturbation Conflict in Puberty*).
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- R. STERBA: Eine Kinderbeobachtung (*An Observation on Children*).
- ED. STERBA: Verbot und Forderung (*Prohibition and Demand*).

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- RENÉ LAFORGUE: Clinique psychanalytique: Les débuts d'un traitement analytique (*Clinical Psychoanalysis: The Beginning of a Psychoanalysis*).
- F. LOWTZKY: L'opposition du surmoi à la guérison: Trois cas cliniques (*Opposition to Cure on the Part of the Superego: Three Clinical Cases*).
- MARIE BONAPARTE: Introduction à la Théorie des Instincts (*An Introduction to the Theory of Instincts*).
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- BUNJI NAGASAKI: Freud und Feuerbach über die Religion (*Freud and Feuerbach on Religion*).
- KENJI OHTSKI: Christentum, Buddhismus und Psychoanalyse (*Christianity, Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*).
- KENJI OHTSKI: Über die Identität des Transmigrationismus und der Auferstehungs idee (*Identity of the Theory of Transmigration and Resurrection*).
- YOSIZUMI HIRATSKA (trans. from OSSIPOW): Verschiedene Phasen des Narzissmus bei L. Tolstoi (*Various Stages of Narcissism in L. Tolstoi*).
- TADAYA TAKEDA: Goethe und Freud; nach Wittels (*Goethe and Freud; according to Wittels*).

**The Psychoanalytic Review. Vol. XXII, Number 1, January, 1935.**

- ERNEST R. GROVES: The Development of Social Psychiatry.
- HAROLD D. LASSWELL: Verbal References and Physiological Changes During the Psychoanalytic Interview.
- JOHN M. DORSEY: The Psychology of the Person Who Stutters.
- PAUL SCHILDER: Personality in the Light of Psychoanalysis.
- FRANZ ALEXANDER: Concerning the Genesis of the Castration Complex.
- BERNARD S. ROBBINS: A Note on the Significance of Infantile Nutritional Disturbances in the Development of Alcoholism.
- LEWIS B. HILL: A Psychoanalytic Observation on Essential Hypertension.

**Vol. XXII, Number 2, April, 1935.**

- CLIFFORD ALLEN: Introjection in Schizophrenia.
- M. E. OPLER: The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Culture.
- IRVING DAVID BERNSTEIN: Psychoanalytic Extensions of the S-R Formula.
- TRIGANT BURROW: Behavior Mechanisms and their Phylopathology.
- PEARCE BAILEY: An Introduction to Rankian Psychology.

**The British Journal of Medical Psychology. Vol. XIV, Part IV, 1934.**

- T. A. ROSS: A Note on *The Merchant of Venice*.
- MELANIE KLEIN: On Criminality.
- KARIN STEPHEN: Introjection and Projection: Guilt and Rage.

**The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. Vol. IV, Number 4, October, 1934.**

- FRANZ ALEXANDER: Evaluation of Statistical and Analytical Methods in Psychiatry and Psychology.

**Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry. Vol. XXXIII, Number 3, 1935.**

- KARL A. MENNINGER: Psychology of a Certain Type of Malingerer.



## NOTES

THE AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ASSOCIATION will have its annual spring meeting on May 15th at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C. Following introductory remarks by Dr. A. A. Brill, there will be the following papers: The Feeling of Insanity, by Dr. Clarence P. Oberndorf; The Application of Psychoanalysis to Psychiatric Problems, by Dr. Bernard Glueck; The Bodily Organs and Psychopathology, by Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe; Towards a Theory of the Instincts, by William V. Silverberg; Certain Reservations to the Concept of Psychic Bisexuality, by Karen Horney; A Type of Woman with a Three-fold Love Life, by Fritz Wittels; Quantitative Dream Studies, by Drs. Franz Alexander and George W. Wilson. This meeting will be followed on May 16th by a round table discussion on Psychoanalysis in Psychiatric Hospitals, with Dr. Richard H. Hutchings as moderator.

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THE CHICAGO INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS reviews its work for 1933-1934 in a pamphlet containing brief considerations of the problems of the teaching of psychoanalysis, of the development of research in psychoanalysis, and of the relation of the latter to medicine. The report also includes an extensive review of current and future projects. Current research has centered around the investigation of the influence of psychogenic factors on the different vegetative systems, and there are brief reports on the study of the influence of psychic factors on gastro-intestinal disturbances (see this QUARTERLY III [1934], 501-588), statistical dream studies, the relation of constipation to paranoia, psychic influences on respiration, psychological factors in essential hypertension and pseudo-angina pectoris, in pituitary disturbances, and in petit mal. Listed under the heading of contemplated research are: psychological factors in dermatologic cases, psychoanalysis and learning, neuro-physiological work to obtain evidence of localized nerve activity in the brain, and the application of psychoanalysis to children.

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A SPECIAL PSYCHOANALYTIC CONFERENCE to be held Easter 1935 in Vienna has been called by the Austrian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Italian members of the International Psychoanalytic Association for the discussion of problems of education, with special reference to training and supervised psychoanalysis (*Kontroll-analyse*), psychic trauma and the management of transference, the destructive instinctual drives, the problem of ego-psychology, and character-analysis.

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THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS in London has published a report of its activities for the year ending June 30, 1934. It includes a record of work done at the London Clinic of Psycho-Analysis under the direction of Dr. Ernest Jones, giving statistical data on the diagnosis of the cases treated during the year.

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IN THE CHILD ANALYSIS issue, January 1935, the introductory notes failed to mention that Dr. Edith Buxbaum and Mrs. Dorothy Tiffany Burlingham (authors of *Child Analysis and the Mother* and *Exhibitionistic Onanism in a Ten Year Old Boy*) are working with the technique of the Vienna school of psychoanalysis; and that Steff and Berta Bornstein have developed their method independently.